

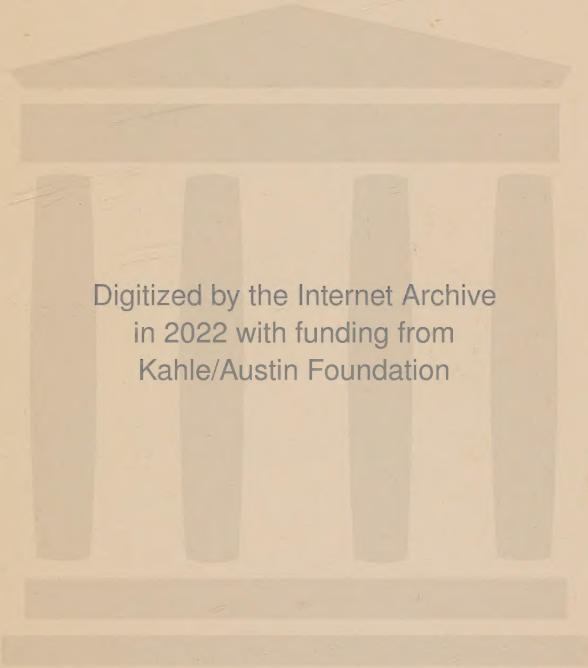
David Lee
With love from
his brother - the Author.

POEMS

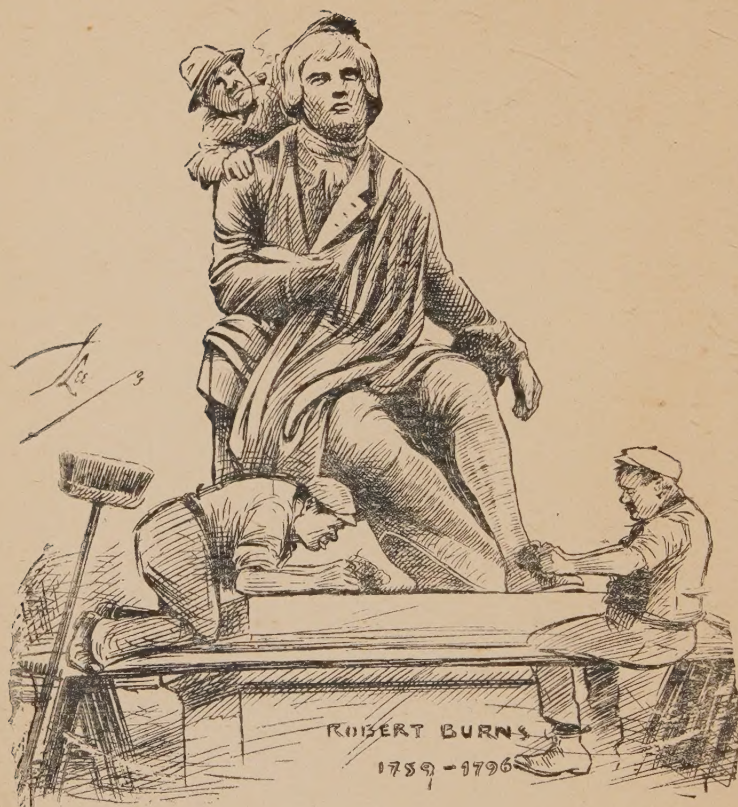
TALES O' OUR TOWN

JOSEPH LEE.

PRINTED
BY
GEORGE MONTGOMERY,
DUNDEE.



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*"Ane wi' a red and raggit shred,
Was dustin' doon that noble head—
That head of gold;
Ane washed—what is't the scribblers say?—
Ane washed the Poet's "feet of clay."—*

THE WHITE-WASHIN' O' ROBBIE BURNS.

POEMS

TALES O' OUR TOWN

BY

JOSEPH LEE

WITH OCCASIONAL ILLUSTRATION BY THE AUTHOR.

DUNDEE :

GEORGE MONTGOMERY,

NEW INN ENTRY (OFF HIGH STREET).

—
1910.

TO MY MOTHER.

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PEDLAR AULD JOCK LAW.

HIS GHOSTLY ENCOUNTER AT
MIDNIGHT WITH BAILIE BRAW
IN THE AULD KIRKYAIRD O'
MAINS.

JUST as the nicht began to fa',
Frae Farfar cam' auld Pedlar Law,
Wi' stoiterin' staps, an' haltin' paces,
On's back his box o' tapes an' laces,
Thinkin'—sae sma' had been his gains—
That nicht to lodge in Den o' Mains.

The Farfar Road to Dundee toon
Has mony an up an' mony a doon,
An' hill an' howe—a weary way
'Twixt Petterden an' Powrie Brae.
To see Jock stagger some'd been thinkin'
At Farfar Fair he had been drinkin',
Whauras he'd only thocht it meet
To tak' a wat against the weet,
An' sair forfoughten was he when
At last he reach'd the bonny Den.

Fair haunt o' happy lad an' lass,
Wi' its hoary elms an' saft green grass;
Wi' its castle, if we'd heed fouk's havers,
Biggit by bonnie, bloody Clavers;
Wi' its kirkyaird hung aboon the burn,
Wi' moss-grown stane an' broken urn.

Sweet scene ! Alas ! Jock knew it well,
 For aft he'd courted here himsel'
 In days lang past his Mary dear.
 (Here Jock wi's hand brush't aff a tear,
 An' sigh'd an' made a heavy mane,
 For she was dead, an' he—alane.)
 An' ere he slept he ponder'd sadly,
 The warld had treated him but badly.

Now, scarce had Jock begun to doze,
 Whan splash ! a raindrap wat his nose.
 He woke—ilk tree, ilk blade stood bricht,
 Then vanished into blackest nicht;
 Cam' then a clap o' fearfu' thunder,
 As tho' the firmament wad sunder ;
 Peal after peal—an' rair and rattle,
 As if fell fiends aboon did battle.
 Again wi' licht the lift was riven,
 Then sheets o' water fell frae heaven;
 It rain'd i' floods, as tho' 'twere fain
 To rain the forty days in ane !

Jock scram'eld up, an' helter-skelter
 Set aff tō seek a place o' shelter.
 He hirpled round the castle wa',
 But it was barr'd an' bouted a' ;
 Syne o' the kirkyaird he bethocht him,
 To whilk a minute's rinnin' brocht him,
 An' tumblin' ower its rusty yett,
 He doon in bed o' nettles set !
 The lyke-wake chapel he'd jaloused
 As welcome sanctu'ry micht be used
 Was shut—a store for pick an' spade,
 Implements o' the beadrel's trade ;
 An' still in floods fell doon the rain ;
 To Jock now naething did remain
 But to crawl underneath a stane—
 The lichtnin' shawed an ancient ane—
 " Erected to mem'ry o' Bailie Braw
 In se'enteen hundert an' forty-twa.
 ' Until the shadows flee awa'.' "

Jock creepit in aneath the stane,
 Wi' mony a grunt an' mony a grane,
 An' muttered prayer, "Guid save us a',
 Whan weather sic as this befa' !"
 An' hoped he'd sleep the half as sound
 Aboon as wha lay 'neath the ground.

But scarce he had five minutes slept,
 Whan through his banes a tremblin' crept,
 An' the hair stood straucht upon his head,
 For the grave gap'd wide, an' he saw the dead;
 Yea, the veritable Bailie Braw,
 In his hat an' chain an' robes an' a',
 O' the period se'enteen forty-twa !
 He sate on his aiken coffin crumbl'd,
 An' his gaunt jaws open'd, an' he mumbl'd—
 "Come into the grave an' speak wi' me,
 For I've but a lanely weird to dree."
 An' Jock the Pedlar was sair afraid,
 But he gruppit his stout stick an' obeyed,
 Though for second time that nicht he prayed.
 Then the great stane sank and shut them in,
 An' Pedlar an' Bailie sate cheek by chin ;
 An' a' was dark an' dank around,
 An' fattened worms writh'd i' the ground—
 The Pedlar was nigh like to swound.

But the Bailie beat his bony breast,
 An' cried, "Waes me, for I canna rest
 Until my sins I hae aince confessed
 To the man should first say a 'Guid save,'
 Aboon my grass-grown, lanely grave."
 (The pedlar had seen the thistles wave.)
 "An' nane hae come, an' nane hae pray'n,
 Thro' a' the years that my banes hae lain ;
 Whan my frien's had gotten my gowd an' a',
 They thocht nae mair o' auld Bailie Braw,
 Nor spar'd our Holy Kirk mite or dole
 To sayin' o' masses for my soul.
 An' I've had a dreary weird to dree,
 Sae look, an' listen—an' learn o' me."

Jock lookit an' listen'd, because he must,
Nor spake, for his mouth was fou' o' dust.

"Mysterious destenie o' man!"
The Bailie dolefully began,
"For tho' his years are but a span,
Yet the seeds then sawn they never dee,
But sprout up to a' Eternitie.

"'Tis now twa hundert years or more
Sin' I first drew breath in Yeaman Shore.
My father, a merchant, as things then ran,
Was reputed a passably wealthy man,
Self-made, an' wont himsel' to pique
On's little Latin, an' less o' Greek.
Indeed, he'd hint that a' sic schulin'
Was verra sma' remov'd frae foolin',
Whilk I approvin', wi' twa-three term
At the Grammar School, gat stool i' the firm.
I fand that the chiefest o' business rules
Was to hold honest men as ae half fools,
An' to dae to ithers—thus an' thus—
Bein' shair they'd dae the same by us.
Leein', bribin', an' stealin' we counted graces"—
(Here the pedlar fand for his box o' laces.)
"I had look'd on a lass o' low degree,"
The Bailie gaed on, wi' a tear in's e'e,
"But what were a' her charms to me?
An' what to me was her gowden hair?
Now gowden coin was a' my care.
Because o' me she brake her he'rt,
I—I brake mair men on the mert.
(My faither had died by his ain hand,
An' 'Braw & Co.' now myself I fand.)
I needna tire ye wi' a' the tale,
The cry o' the children, the widows' wail—
My meal an' my oil-cruse didna fail.
I regular went to kirk on Sunday—
An' plann'd there mony a coup for Monday.
I gae a groat an' gat a croon,
Was respect' as the richest man i' toon.

I robbit, but ran weel within th' law,
An' so—they made me Bailie Braw.

“Said I, ‘I surely now am blest,
I’ll live at ease an’ tak’ my rest,
An’ dae to me as seemeth best.
I’ve gowd, an’ land, an’ houses three—
THAT NICHT WAS MY SOUL REQUIRED OF ME.

“Some be wha say the dead do dwell
Harpin’ in heaven—howlin’ in hell—
Heed nae, Gehenna’s in oorsel’,
An’ tho’ the banes an’ body rot,
There is the worm which dieth not.”

The Bailie’s head sank on his breast.
“Sae sound,” said he, “I now shall rest,
Since that my sins I hae confessed.
But, Pedlar, this I ask o’ thee,
Mak’ known what thou did’st hear an’ see
To such as sit in places hie.
An’ now guidbye, auld Pedlar chiel’,
Muckle I owe thee, fare-ye-weel.”
Wi’ that he vanishéd awa’.
Jock glow’r’d, an’ glow’r’d, but naething saw.
In verra truth he was alane,
An’ shiverin’ in aneath the stane.
He heard the burnie purlin’ near,
He heard a thrush sing loud an’ clear.
The day broke fair as fair could be—
Jock up, an’ hied him to Dundee,
An’ tauld this awesome tale to me.

THE
WHITE-WASHIN' O' ROBBIE BURNS.

YESTREEN I sauntered round the Square,
The statues four were standing there—
 Ye ken them weel—
Kinloch, Carmichael, and the Queen,
And Rab (wi's big, uplifted een),
 In bronze—by Steele !

Wi' parted lips, but cold and dumb,
He sits amid the city's hum,
 Aside the street ;
Yet oft we notice, as we pass,
The modest daisy in the grass
 Spring at his feet.

And nigh, the fairy fountain, leaping,
Mounting and murmuring, and weeping,
 Sings in our ears,
Like Lugar low, or bonnie Doon—
Perchance the same old sad sweet tune
 The poet hears.

But YESTERDAY—I stood and gazed
Upon the moniment amazed
 At what I saw.
For three loons, arm'd wi' brush and mop,
And soda, scouge, and guid soft soap,
 Scrubbit awa !

Ane wi' his tongue hung frae his jaw,
And wi' a dishclout in his paw,
 Rubb'd at the scroll,
As aff the schlate he wish'd to clean
A'thing that might be thought obscene
 Or ower droll !

Ane wi' a red and raggit shred,
 Was dustin' doon that noble head—
 That head of gold ;
 Ane washed—what is't the scribblers say ?—
 Ane washed the Poet's " feet of clay "—
 O, critics cold !
 Wad they but mind that he—as they—
 Was made frae mold !

His faults ? His sins ? Who is't will cry—
 " This man walk'd straight, this went awry,"
 And cast the stone ?
 The Potter fashioning the clay,
 Of fair or foul 'tis He can say—
 And He alone.

Religions of a thousand rules,
 And churchman's creed, and scheme of schools
 Of ponderous plan !
 His but the free, unfetter'd mind—
 His creed was only to be kind
 To mouse or man !

Behold me ower the railing leanin'
 To watch this whimsical spring-cleanin'
 O' our great poet ;
 Thocht I, " Man, Rab, this is a ploy
 That ye wad unco weel enjoy
 Could ye but know it ! "

Just then in's e'en gaed schlyte o' soap—
 I saw them shut—I saw them ope—
 And syne his mouth—
 " It weel may be, lads, that I'm dry,
 But put na liquor in my eye
 To quench my drouth !

" Look ! Ower yonder's an hotel—
 O, ay, there's water i' the well
 And in your pail ;
 But backward dae I flee in fancy

To thae wild nichts whan Poussie Nancy
Sell't reamin' ale !"

I thocht to see the men look baffled,
Or even tum'le aff their scaffold,
But feint a bit !
As tho' they naither heard nor saw,
They dusted, dighted, douched awa'
Frae head to fit.

Rab turned to me, " What's a' this fash ?
Ah ! but I see—aince mair—white-wash !"
Said he, richt sadly.
" Weel, weel, wi' a' the steer an' skurry,
They've made frae Henley back to Currie,
I'se need it badly."

Thocht I, " Whan buried an' forgotten
Lie a' the critics e'er begotten,
Thou shalt not die ;
Tho' on thy head the dust of ages,
Nae dust shall gather on thy pages "—
Rab heaved a sigh.

Said he, " In sunshine smile I'd bask'd,
But when for only bread I asked—
Behold a stone !
I knew the quick averted glance,
The upcurled lip, the look askance—
I walked alone.

"But aye repaid them sneer for sneer—
Ourselves alone can harm us here—
Ah, there's the rub !
My heart beat high, my blood leap'd wild,
And oft my straying feet were filed
In drift and dub.

"Oh, what avails the years we see—
Or thirty-seven or seventy-three,
Whan ends the story ?

Some dee as tho' they'd ne'er been livin'—
Too cauld for hell, too hot for heaven,
Or purgatory !

“ The power alone that formed me—man—
Can say how far I marred the plan,
But d'ye ken ?

Mayhap had I ne'er gaen awrong
Not half sae sure had sped my song

'Mang sinfu' men.”

(Quoth I, “ Amen !”)

Rab glanced around, “ It wad appear
Ye've progressed some this hundert year—
The world seems waking.

But still are fearsome foes for fighting,
Still are there wrongs that wait for righting,
Man's i' the making.

“ Still curb'd by clerics, courtiers, kings ;
Still Dives unto Lazarus flings

A dole of crumbs ;

But yet that day of which I spake
Draws nearer—THOU may see it break !

It comes ! It comes !

“ Farewell ! ” Rab nothing further said,
But raised to heaven once more his head—

It might hae seem'd—

But for that twinkle o' his e'e,

But for the words he held wi' me,

But that the hour was only three !—

That I had dream'd !

[Perhaps I owe something in the nature of an apology to the three respectable and capable-looking workmen whom I found at work on the Burns Statue, for the various liberties I have ventured to take with them.]



"They stumbl'd efter ane anither—Each clingin' closer than a brither."—THE DEIL'S STANE.

THE DEIL'S STANE.

OF ITS MYSTERIOUS AND WEIRD
BIRLIN' AT COCK-CROW, AS WIT-
NESSED BY RAB WYNTOUN AND
DONAL' GRAHAM, PLOUGHMEN.

SOME folks do say the deil is dead,
An' buried —somewhere ower in Fife ;
Ithers wad hae him still i' life,
Aye stirrin' up sair sturt an' strife ;
Some think the Higher Creetics chill'd him ;
Some that the new Theol'gy kill'd him—
Well, weel awa' oorsel's hae willed him.
Yet still, that he's been here is plain,
How else account for ' Paddock Stane' ?
Which lies, as ye nae doot hae seen,
Midway 'twixt Gowrie an'—Wast Green .
How't cam' each wife an' wean can tell,
I had it frae Meg Craw hersel'.

Meg Craw wha couldna thole the Jews,
An' whan the plate pass'd round the pews
Towards their inbringin', loudly cried—
"They'll no' come in ! Lave them ootside !
Crankous craiters ! Na, na ! Bawbee
For them ye's never get frae me !"

Gif Clootie's cauld, then, his memento-mori
Is this same stane—howbe, lat's to our story.

Saturday nicht—sweet lowsin' time,
Beloved o' men in ilka clime ;
Saturday nicht—the morn' Sunday—
Wi' naught but orra jobs till Monday !

Rab, Jock, an' Andra frae the byre
 Are sittin' ower the bothy fire,
 Warmin' their hands—an' syne their he'rts
 Wi' just a drap o' what imparts
 A welcome warmth, a gratefu' glow,
 An' gars the tongue mair freely go.

Sae they the latest gossip tell
 'Bout Muirhead Will an' *Muirful* Belle,
 An' how the craps are like to sell,
 Wi' mony ither things as well.

Syne Donal' Graham comes drappin' in,
 Whan straicht begins a merry din ;
 For Donal' has been to Dundee,
 An' had a " hauf " or twa—or three.
 Sae mony a jest an' mony a joke,
 An' mony anither bottle's broke.
 The fun gaes fast, an' then ere lang
 Young haffin Jock's ca'd for a sang,
 Wi' " Come awa'," an' " What supposin',"
 " There's nane o' us as creetics posin'
 Gie's yon bit o' yer ain composin'."

Jock's just a wee bit blate an' back'ard,
 Grow's red's his hair, an' looks fell awk'ard;
 " Ye ken I canna sing a note,"
 Yet clears his tankard an' his throat,
 Thro's curly locks his fingers rins,
 An' blaws his kneb, an' thus begins:—

Song—"The Wench at the Window."

Ae mornin' in Spring, as I sauntered alang
 By the side o' the auld Mill o' Weir,
 My nose in a batter'd auld book o' Scots sang,
 An' the lilt o' the birds in my ear ;
 Cam' a saft siller laugh floating doon frae aboon—
 I started, to think wha't could be,

An' glow'r'd up an' doon, an' lookit a' roun',
 Then sweet was the sicht met my e'e ;
 For a wench at the window,
 A sweet wench at the window,
 Smiled shyly an' slyly at me.

Then she loot a red rose tremble doon to my feet,
 As I stood, gowk-like, bonnet in hand,
 While she lookit sae winsome, sae coy, an' sae sweet,
 I thocht speech I wad never hae fand,
 But I pluckit a bloom frae a bonnie bit brier,
 An' threw't in at the window sae hie,
 An' I said, " I'll be passin' the auld Mill o' Weir
 To-morrow sometime about three ;
 So be there at the window,
 Oh, be at the window,
 An' smile sweetly an' kindly to me,"

An' that's some time since, an' she now is my ain,
 An' here in the auld Mill o' Weir,
 On kings an' their croons I look doon wi' disdain,
 For a queen is my ain, only dear.
 O bless'd be the day that I wandered alang
 Whar' the birds chant'd frae every tree,
 Wi' my nose in that batter'd auld book o' Scots sang
 Whan her laugh float'd sweetly to me.
 For aye at the window,
 The same auld mill window,
 There's a smile an' a welcome for me.

" Bravo ! " " Encore ! " " Good lad ! " they rair,
 " Come on, Jock, man, gie's something mair."
 Jock, efter weetin' weel his whistle,
 Sings sang on sang like ony throstle.
 An' syne frae sang they pass to story ;
 An' some are gay, some grave—even gory ;
 Some are o' Scotland's ancient glory.

How Wallace went to Dundee schule,
 An' early proved himsel' nae fule.

An' a' hae seen the auld bear-stane
On which he rested on that e'en
The English Gov'nor's son he'd slain,
An' for the deed to's heels had ta'en.

How Bruce, the bold, passed by that way,
Siege to auld Dundee's tower to lay.

How zealous Wishart groan'd an' wept
While a' around him soundly slept.

How Piper Pat, half fou', half sleepin',
Cried oot i' kirk, " Wha peys my keepin'."

About the auld stool o' repentance—
An' folk wha yet should mak' its 'quaintance—
An' tales o' some wha ga'ed asquint,
Which, for their sakes, I'll no can print.

O' " Gows o' Gowrie, " in the sand,
How, whan the twain will come to land,
The Day o' Judgment's near at hand.
(Which, whan Tam Rymour prophysay'd
He'd dream't na o' oor Esplanade !)
Frae a' reports it wad appear
The Gows creep in an inch ilk year,
An' folks come travelin' oot to see
How they're progressin', frae Dundee.
Here hiccup'd Andra, " Bide or come,
Ilk day is Judgment Day to some."
An' coup'd owre's chair, an' no' bein' able
To rise, snor'd on alow the table !

An' now Jock struck a solemn key,
" Dids't ever hear the tale," quo' he,
" O' the devil an' auld Dargie Kirk ?"
(The nicht outside was wild and mirk.
" Listen !" cried Rab. " What was that shindy ?"
'Twas but the wind tryin' the winda.)
" Mill's gien't as in the year o' grace,

Fower thirty-one cam' Boniface
 To big a kirk intil this place ;
 The first as ye maun understand
 Was ever biel't in braid Scotland ;
 Sae nae doot but 'twas muckle needit,
 An' monk an' mason weel it speedit."

" Now it chanc't that by the Swilcan burn,
 Saint Andrews, Auld Nick took a turn,
 An' Dargie Kirk, he did discern.
 Aye protestant—this papish wark,
 Gar't him gang wud as ony stirk ;
 ' What ! biggin' kirks—nor me cousultin'—
 In Scotland to—why, maist insultin'—
 A place peculiar unto me—
 How daur they ?—But I'se lat them see.'
 An' pickin' up a big round boulder,
 Pois'd it a moment on his shoulder,
 (Just as auld Donald Dinnie'd do it).
 Syne deep his brimstane breath he drew it,
 Hap, stap, an' then the stane he threw it.
 Swifter than arrow in it's flight,
 Swifter than powther or lyddite
 Could sent it, that great stane gaed whizzin',
 An' like an angry bee cam bizzin',
 Richt ower the kirk, richt ower the heads
 O' the schlaters workin' on the leads,
 Which caus't nae doubt, a muckle coil—
 Ae man had fa'en but for a gargoye.
 A mile, the stane to Nor'-Wast went
 Or e'er its spitefu' force was spent,
 An' it at last a billet found,
 Whar ye may see't i' Greystane Ground.
 A proper end for spitfu' wark—
 Satan oftimes o'ershoots the mark."

" How ken ye but that Satan sinister
 Flang, not at minster, but at minister ?"
 Wi' muckle slyness Robin says,
 " Thing common enough these verra days.
 Wha kens but if ye'd lift that stane,

Ye'd find a skull—or ass jaw-bane ?"
 " That micht be sae without a doubt,
 Tho' clerics arena craws to shoot."
 Says Jock, " But strangest thing o' a',
 Ilk mornin', just aboot cock-craw,
 The stane whirls thrice upon its axis"—
 Wi' that Rab unco mirthfu' waxes,
 An' cries, " The legend's a' a lee,
 Or, gif ye will, lat's gae an' see !"
 Just then auld Forgan knock struck three,
 (A clock, by-way, whan't deigns to go,
 Aye half-hour fest—or quarter slow !)
 Cries Donal', " Yea, lat's ging an' see."
 Ploy this on which they sune agree—
 Tho' hafin Jock hings back awee.
 But, an' afore abroad they sally,
 An' we intent themsel's to rally,
 An' keep their spunk an' spirits up
 Each swallows doon anither sup
 Frae cheerin', but bewitchin' cup !

The pow'rs o' darkness seem'd abroad,
 As they stapp't oot upon the road,
 An' ploiter't on thro' mire an' mud.
 The mune was hod by flyin' scud,
 An' no' a kindly star they see,
 But distant lights o' auld Dundee.
 The wind gaed soughin' thro' the trees,
 The three were feelin' ill at ease—
 " Hark ! What was that ?" 'Twas puir Jock's knees !
 To meet—'twad be but sorra wark—
 The Prince o' Darkness i' the dark !
 An' sair dispos'd was Jock to shirk,
 As past auld Dargie's eerie kirk
 They stumbl't efter ane anither—
 Each clingin' closer than a brither !
 An' whan a cock 'gan loud to craw,
 Jock taen to's heels an' ran awa' !
 Half o' their muddl'd wits bereft—
 Nor lookin' to the richt or left,
 Far less ahent, the twa alane

Gaed on. At last—there stood the stane !
Donal', he glow'r'd, syne started skirlin',
“ Losh ! Look ! Rab, look ! The stane is birlin' ! ”
Quo' Rab, “ *The stane—an' a'thing else is whirlin' !* ”

Ye'd hae a moral to my tale ?
Drink na too deep o' malted yill ;
Beware th' wine when it is red,
Or, at cock-crow be fest in bed.



SYVAN STREAM.*

THE DEN O' MAINS.

O, Syvan stream, row soft and low,
 Where thou art seeking for the sea ;
 How oft, in old days, long ago,
 I've listened to thy pleasant flow
 That now chaunts dirge to me.

I first beheld her by thy side,
 Within the blessed evening time ;
 Her form was mirroured in thy tyde,
 So slight, so fair—she seemed to glide
 A creature of some heavenly clime.

We trysted 'neath the hoary tree
 That stands beside yon haunted wa' ;
 She gave her heart so full and free—
 Angels abune might well envie
 The luve betwixt us twa.

O, cruel Chance which thus could play
 With us, poor children of the dust,
 Which gave us joyaunce for a day—
 Then darkness and despair alway
 And mystery and mistrust.

O, cruel Fate which might not spare
 One thus so sweet, so passing sweet,
 So fashioned fair, surpassing fair—
 So altogether rich and rare
 For fullest life so meet.

Sweet Syvan stream row soft and low,
 Where thou art seeking for the sea ;
 How oft, in past days, long ago,
 We twa hae heard thy pleasant flow,
 That now chaunts dirge to me.

* *The Syvan was the early, and certainly more euphonious name, of the streamlet now known as the Gelly Burn.*

TINKLER MACLAREN.

THE clan MacLaren frae the hills,
 Are in to toon,
 To our auld toon,
 In search o' sundry haufs and gills,
 All in the mornin' early ;
 Wi' in their rags the smell o' heather,
 And on their skins the signs o' weather ;
 In front, Alan and Neil thegither,
 Skirlin' baith loud and rarely ;
 Wi' twa three bairns upo' their backs
 In auld shawls swingin' ;
 Tin pots, and things a housewife lacks,
 A' blythely ringin' ;
 Blawn as the pipers' chouks wad rax,
 The bagpipes dingin'—
 Come the tinklers deil-ma-carely.

And now, fast as they sell a tin,
 To spend the *brass* they a' step in—
 E'en grannie gets her nip o' gin
 Or glass o' toddy—
 A Hielan' kimmer, hard to kill,
 Wha, whan in ward she's lyin' ill,
 Cried, " Out upon a heather hill
 Let's lay my bed-rack'd body !"

They drink until at length young Alan
 Slips to the floor, puir simple callan',
 But Neil plays laments for the fallen
 Micht gar ye greet ;
 Then sudden ends in grunts and groans,
 A twist or twa gies to his drones,
 Syne, strikin' into brisker tones,
 Mak's for the street.

Fired by the spirit o' his clan,
 And eke the spirit sold at Nan
 Macfarlane's hostel, Neil began
 To strut fu' proudly ;
 His head was hie, his neck was thrawn,
 His ruddy chouks were outward blawn,
 As fifty crowin' cocks at dawn
 He blew as loudly.

Rises the slogan shrill and clear,
 The folks crowd round frae far and near,
 E'en Roy the drouth lays down his beer,
 And staggers out—
 Neil plays them pibroch, march, and reel,
 Set aff wi' warblers* thick and weel,
 Till Roy is fain to shake a heel—
 “ Hooch ! ” hear him shout.

Behold Roy up the pavement prance,
 Wi' unco staps—retire, advance,
 And mony a movement in his dance
 Quite unbekannt in Spain or France—
 But what cares he ?
 He's fu' o' every fecht since Flodden,
 He minds o' dolefu', dread Culloden,
 And puir auld Scotland sair doon-trodden
 Since 1603 !

Now *Tullochgorum* Neil essays,
 And faster aye and faster plays,
 And louder his great bag-pipe brays—
 His een stare straucht afore him,
 And back and forrit Roy doth go ;
 Back and forrit, back and forrit,
 Back and forrit Roy doth go
 While loud the crowds encore him ;

* In bagpipe-playing the performers introduce among the simple notes of the tune a kind of *appoggiatura*, consisting of a great number of rapid notes of peculiar embellishment, which they term “ warblers.”

Back and forrit Roy doth go,
 Wi' wondrous twists o' heel and toe,
 Wi' crackin' thooms, and "Hooch !" and "Ho !"
 He gies them *Tullochgorum*.

And syne Neil passes round the hat—
 I canna tell how much he gat—
 But sure, enough to stand a wat,
 Sae aff they stagger ;
 As cronies crouse, each clings to aither,
 Roy claiming Neil as clansman—brither,
 And wi' the pipes slung ower *his* shouther,
 Whilk gars him swagger.

.

Nor ken I wha, or what, to blame,
 That whan they took their flight for hame,
 Each lost's identity and name—
 But this in truth I ken :
 They fand Neil snorin' on Roy's stair,
 What time Roy wi' his head in air,
 (The quaking pipes still in his care),
 Marched straucht for Lumley Den ! †

† *Lumley Den, where still usually is the encampment of this tattered tribe.*

BALLAD OF NINE MAIDENS' WELL.

AND THE SLAYING OF THE
DRAGON BY MARTIN THE
SMITH.

It was the Miller o' Pittempan,
And he had daughters nine ;
In a' the country round Dundee
Were nane that were sae fine.

It was the Miller o' Pittempan,
Had daughters three times three,
And 'mang the fairest o' the land
The fairest they wad be.

And hame and hame, as the sun gaed doon,
Cam' the Miller o' Pittempan,
A' smoor'd i' the white dust o' his mill,
Deed he was a drouthy man.

" Gae bring not the red wine or the white
Frae Medoc or Moselle,
But bring me a draught o' the cauld water,
Which lies in my ain clear well."

Then up arose his youngest daughter,
His daughter Isobel,
" But I'll bring ye a draught o' the cauld water,
Which springs in our ain clear well."

And up arose Martin the Smith,
A sturdy youth was he,
" Now will I with thee to the well,
Bear the water back for thee."

She has tossed her head high i' the air,
And loud and lang laughed she,
" It sall ne'er be said that the mighty Martin
Bore my sma' pitcher hame for me."

She has ta'en her pitcher in her hand,
Gaed lynkin' ower the lea ;
And still and still the time flew by,
And never hame cam' she.

" Now what can ail my youngest daughter,
My daughter Isobel ?
She maun hae foregather'd wi' Smith Martin,
To bide sae lang at the well."

Then up and spake his next daughter,
Fair maiden, Marjorie,
" But I will go down to the well,
And see what I can see."

She has buskit up her bonnie hair,
Gaed lynkin' ower the lea ;
And but and but the time sped by
And never hame cam' she.

Then up spak Agnes and Winifred,
Were ever side by side ;
" We twain will gae unto the well,
And see what gars them bide."

They hae clasp'd ilk ither round the waist
Ran merrily down the way :
But the time gaed by, and the time slipp'd by,
And never hame cam' they.

Now up and spak the eldest three,
Madge, Marion, and May,
' Come, let us to the well and see,
What keeps them a' this day."

They hae putten on their sandal shoon,
Gaed quickly ower the lea ;
But now, and tho' the sun was doon,
Hame cam' nane o' the three.

And at the last, to her sister Alice,
The stately Catherine said—
“ Pray, sister, come wi' me to the well,
For sore I am afraid.”

They hae putten on their sandal shoon,
And their lang, lang cloaks o' grey ;
And up arose the bluid-red mune,
But never hame cam' they.

It was the Miller o' Pittempan
Sat dozin' at the fire,
And he bethought him o' his thirst,
And stirred himself wi' ire.

“ O' daughters hae I three times three,
And a' are at the well ;
But an' a man wad droon his drooth
He maun gae for the drink himsel'.”

And as the Miller gaed to the well,
An angry man was he ;
But whan the Miller cam' to the well,
A waesome sicht met his e'e.

For there lay dead his nine daughters,
His daughters sae fine and fair ;
The bluid was on their bonny brows,
And on their gowden hair.

And round them was wreathed a great serpent,
Wi' spreckled skin and scale,
And the sharpen'd stang at its body's end,
It movéd like a flail.

And out o' its horrid mouth cam' forth
An odious poisonous breath,
And it's glow'ring een were a' aflame—
But to gaze on them was death.

When the Miller saw his daughters dead
He was a waefu' man ;
But an' he beheld that fiendish form
He bow'd himself an ran.

And faster aye the Miller ran,
Nor turned about his head,
Until that he met wi' Smith Martin,
Tells him Isobel is dead.

Tells him maiden Isobel is dead,
And a' her sisters fair,
Wi' dabbled bluid upon their brows,
And on their yellow hair.

And of that gruesome, fiendish form,
Wi' its spreckled skin o' mail ;
And its awesome breath, and it's een o' death,
And its wildly lashing tail.

Smith Martin has ta'en his great fore-hammer,
And ne'er a word spake he ;
But, " Now will I gae down to the well,
For me or it maun dee."

He has come up wi' that loathly beast;
" Come out, thou thing unclean,"
And he has lifted his great fore-hammer,
Struck it full betwixt the een.

And straight it made a girn and groan,
A gruesome, horrid din'
Then drew itsel' in coils and folds
And from the field gan rin.

Martin's taen his leman in his arms,
And kiss'd her clay-cauld brow,
" I michtna carry thy sma' pitcher,
I bear heavier burden now.

" A heavy burden I maun bear
 For ever on my heart ;
 Yet sweet and fair beyond compare,
 Not lang they sall us part."

He has mounted on his guid stout steed,
 Ridden wi' micht and main,
 And the beast o'ertaen at Ba-Dragon—
 And stricken it again.

Stricken it sore at Strick-Martine;
 Broken baith body and bane ;
 And now and as the dark cam' doon,
 He's killed it at " Martin's Stane."

" O' this has been a dreary day,
 But now the end I see;"
 He has turned on his weary, wounded side,
 And there did brave Martin dee.*

O maidens still are just as fair,
 As bright of eyne, as soft of hair,
 As in that far off long ago ;
 And she who did so shyly show
 Me where the limpid waters flow
 From out the ancient " Maidens' Well,"
 Might have been Maiden Isobel.

**Martin's Stane stands in a field on the farm of Balbeuchly, at Balluderon, and there is another sculptured stone in the garden of Mr Grant, at Craigmills. These stones, and tradition current in the district, seem to point to an actual happening of some old tragedy, such as we have endeavoured to suggest in the Ballad of the Nine Maidens' Well. An ancient quatrain still survives, which is very definite as regards the locale of the incident:—*

" It was tempit at Pittempan,	Stricken at Strike-Martin,
Draggelt at Ba-Dragon,	And killed at Martin-Stane."

Or as another version has it :—

" Chased the Dragon at Pittempan,	Struck it at Strickmartin,
Come up wi't at Baldragon,	And killed it at Martin's stane."

THE AULD TIME-GUN.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
QUARTER-MASTER PONTON, R.A.

THOU muckle piece o' misshaped metal,
Art thou for firin' aye as fettle,
As when I waited for thy roar
In these old long-lost days of yore ?
I'd thocht thou had been gettin' dune—
Like me—thou auld time gun !

Heav'n only kens whar thou were casted,
Or in what furnace thou wert blasted,
Or if thou e'er dealt death and dool
At siege of stout Sebastopol ;
We've heard o' nae ill deed thou'st dune—
Thou'st just an auld time-gun.

But yet if Deutschland's dreaded corps
Should seek to land upon our shores,
I've nae doot but a muckle bullet
Belched fae thy grimy, gapin' gullet,
Wad gar them run—
Thou auld time-gun !

However wad our auld town-folk,
But for thy bang ! ken what's o'clock ?
Or how this weary warld was wagging ?
Or if their watch was fest or lagging ?
But thou art steady as the sun,
Guid auld time-gun !

I mind how as a tiny boy,
Wi' holy fear—unholy joy—
And fingers pressed into each ear,
I waited breathlessly to hear
 The sound that cam' wi' sic a stun
 Frae out the auld time-gun.

Then in below thy awfu' shouter,
We'd gather up the half-spent pouter,
And plant the mine, and lay the train,
And blow up Delhi gate again !—
 We'd mony a bit o' frolic fun
 Round thee, thou auld time-gun !

* And he, of the high-carried head,
And stately, measured soldier tread,
Who all the riot red did see
And madness of the Mutiny,
 And sterner duties might not shun,
 Now fires the harmless auld time-gun !

Ye look, auld gun, as ye micht last
Till maist o' men-made things were past ;
Wha kens ? it may be thine to boom
The last and awful crack o' doom !
 O may I lang hae heaven won
 Ere then, thou auld time-gun !

** Quarter-Master Ponton, who during the Mutiny, took part
in the grim work of blowing the Sepoys from the cannon mouth.*



THE WAUKRIFE WYVERNS.

AN EPISODE OF THE ELECTION.

'Twas that sad season o' the year
 Whan cauld blasts hint November near,
 And rain fluids fa', and leaves are sere,
 And skies are grey,
 And everything—save man—is sober.
 'Twas—well 'twas twenty-fifth October,
 The Lordis day.

'Twas Sabbath nicht, the clinkum-bell,
 'Tauld o' harangues on heaven and hell—
 I *read* a sermon to mysel'
 Frae aff the stones
 In the Auld Howff,* whaur ye maun ken
 I walked—that haunt whaur mony men
 Hae laid their bones.

Vast meeting-place whaur all are mute,
 For dust has ended the dispute ;
 These yards are fat wi' ither fruit
 Than whan the friars
 Grew apples red for their wine-presses—
 And stole frae ruddier dames caresses,
 Else men are liars.

* The "yardis qlk sumtyme wes occupyit be ye Gray Cordelier Freris" as an orchard, were granted to the town as a burying-place by Queen Mary in 1564. The Nine Crafts, having wisely decided not to meet in taverns and alehouses, made this their meeting place, hence the name "Howff" or haunt.



*Here many a rude and broken mound
Wi' mould'ring wrack is strawed around;
Methinks, long ere the last trump sound,
The dead below,
Finding their tombs o'erthrown and rent,
May leave their tumbling tenement,
And rise and go!*

—WAUKRIFE WYVERNS.

Yea ! all are dead, and all are dumb,
 And we, whan ends life's sturt and strum,
 To this same sorry pass will come—

Then what's the odds ?

We lolled wi' Dives on the plush ?

We lay wi' Lazarus in the slush ?

Tush ! See these sods !

Here mony a rude and broken mound
 Wi' mould'ring wrack is strawed around ;
 Methinks, long ere the last trump sound,

The dead below,

Finding their tombs o'erthrown and rent,
 May leave their tumbling tenement,

And rise and go !

Thus I meandered, idly musing,
 And now and then some stane perusing,
 Didactic, artless, or amusing,

Tho' kindly most ;

Hieroglyphics, rude and broken,
 Each coming like a saft word spoken
 By some poor ghost :—

Andrew Mureson and Mangt. Hamzay
 his wife. 1629.

*" To quarrel death for his change were but vain,
 For death spares nather godly nor prophane.
 To say she's changed twar but a foolish storie,
 If not to live eternalie in glorie."*

"C. S., date circa 1600.

Mensis Marcii die 6.

Man, tak hed to me,

How thou sal be,

Quhan thou art dead ;

Drye as a trei,

Vermes sal eat ye ;

Thy great bodie

Sal be like lead.

*Ye tyme hath bene,
In my zooth grene,
That I was clene
Of bodie as ye ar;
Bot for my eyen
Now two holes bene;
Of me is sene
Bot banes bare.'*

"Robert Maresone, 1687.

*Away, vaine world! thou ocean of
annoies,
And com, sweet heaven, with thy
aeternal joyes."*

Now I, these auld-world records reading,
And pondering them, paid little heeding,
To that the time was quickly speeding,
Till somewhat shockit
To find the hour was quite sae late—
To find, whan I got to the gate,
That it was lockit!

What should I dae? Climb ower the railin'?
But then the churches a' were scalin',
And courting couples byward trailin'—
My dignitie
Wadna permit that I should try it,
But counselled me, till things were quiet,
To bide awee.

So doon I sat me on a stane;
My back against anither ane,
While fancies flicker'd thro' a brain
But hauf awake;
Sudden I started wi' surprise,
And held my breath, and rubbed my eyes;
Sure, something spake!

“ O, lang, lang hae we lookit doon”—
 I lookit up, I lookit roun’,
 To see whence cam’ that eldritch soun’—
 Then what a sicht !
 For there confab’d the Wyverns twa,
 Their tails, unnowed, hung ower the wa’,
 Their een shone bricht !

There sat at ease the Wyverns twa,
 Wha wont to grimly guard the wa’—
 Each clutched a clay-pipe in his claw ;
 They took their smoke
 Like cronies crouse, nor cared a jot
 For shield, or lilies in a pot,
 (While I stood fettered to the spot)
 And thus ane spoke :

“ O lang and lang I’ve lookit doon
 On bonnie, dirty, Dundee toon,
 And seen i’ Council knave and clown,
 But sic a crew
 O’ rowdy, rantin’, roarin’ fellows—
 Sae scant o’ sense, sae sound o’ bellows—
 I never knew.”*

His neighbour says, “ Upon my soul
 I sometimes think it unco droll
 Th’ ‘ *Prudence and Candour*’ on our scroll ;
 Alas, alack !
 These virtues twain, in our Toon House
 Hae somewhat drapped into disuse
 This some time back.”

The ither’s breath glow’d sulphurous hot :
 “ There’s few that serve the Lord for nought,
 There’s few that arena to be bought ;
 As sure’s I’m born,
 If I could only get my way,
 I’d toom the half into the Tay,
 The morn’s morn.”

* It is of course to be understood that this was written of the year——, and has no reference to present-day municipal politics.

“ It’s no that I wad wish to see
 A chamber whaur nane disagree,
 For that but breeds chicanery ;
 It’s my belief,
 That often he nane wad suspect—
 The man wha gets the maist respect—
 Is rogue and thief.”

“ But this continual bark and bite,
 This vented spleen, this petty spite,
 This standin’, each for his *ain* right,
 Against the others !
 I’m sure but for the big oak table,
 There still are Cains wad be quite able
 To slay their brothers.”

The other said, “ Could they but know,
 How quiet are the dead below,
 The poor how patient in their woe,
 ’Twould be reminder ;
 I hae nae doubt but there and then
 Each, to his fellow Council men,
 Would act the kinder.”

“ E’en *he*—his name I winna say—
 Might tak’ a thocht and mend his way ”—
 Wi’ that I out and cried, “ Hurrah ! ”—
 At once there came
 A whirr o’ wings, a clash o’ scales,
 An awesome wallop in’ o’ tails,
 A flash o’ flame.

And syne to my amaze I saw
 That these sly rogues, the Wyverns twa,
 Stood to their duty on the wa’
 As firm’s a rock ;
 Then from St Mary’s square-built tower
 I heard a bell boom forth the hour—
 ’Twas twal o’clock !

THE SIDLAW HILLS.

AT SIGHT OF THE CYPRESS
RANGE, ALBERTA.

THE high hills, the low hills,
The quiet hills o' hame;
It's O, that I were lying there,
Where curlews wild are crying there,
Far ower the saut sea faem.

The high hills, the low hills,
Wi' yellow broom aglow ;
It's, O, that I were roaming there,
Wi' her, where darkly foaming there,
The rushing torrents go.

The high hills, the low hills,
The hills we trod together ;
The silver sage-brush groweth here—
But pale to him who knoweth, dear,
The sight o' purple heather.

O, high hills, O, low hills,
Ye have my heart in hold ;
Where lonely I am dwelling here,
The plains are widely swelling here—
Give me thy ramparts old.

O, high hills, O, low hills,
O, fair hills ower the faem ;
Where lightly winds are sighing there,
Where high the clouds are flying there,
Where curlews wild are crying there,
It's O, that I were lying there—
For then were I at hame.

THE DURANCE O' DICK DROUTH.

A STORY OF THE LOCK-UP IN
THE AULD STEEPLE.

MEN in their cups are curious chiels,
Wi' some the head, wi' some the heels—
There's Tammas raves, while Geordie reels,
 But a' seem jolly;
Though, on the morn, mony ane feels
 Fell melancholy.

A century or twa ago,
Dick Drouth strod doon the Nether Row,
Wi' staps that straigelt to and fro,
 But he'rt fu' licht ;
That he might see his way to go—
 The mune shone bricht.

Dick's he'rt was licht, but what was worse,
It wasna lichtier than his purse—
That nicht had ye seen Dick disburse
 What's toil had brocht him,
Lord o' at least the Universe
 Ye nicht hae thocht him.

And now Dick Drouth began to sing
In voice that made the lang street ring,
And sleepy burghers' ears did ding ;
 But loud and long,
Despite the curses which they fling,
 Dick pours his song :

"Deed I avouch, and I avow,"
 Dick bellow'd loud as ony cow,
 "Whan youth and pleasure's at the prow
 And at the tiller,
 Then very quick, indeed, I trow,
 Slips out the siller."

But as Dick loudly bawls his snatch,
 Comes by auld Willie Ward, the watch,
 Intent just such nicht-hawks to catch ;
 He springs his rattle ;
 Now, Dick, my man, thou'st met thy match—
 Prepare for battle.

Himself on's man bauld Willie threw,
 "What gars ye mak' sic loud to-do—
 There's fouk i' warld as weel as you."
 Dick scanned the sky—
 "Look !" hiccuped he, "the mune is fou'—
 An' sae am I."

"Ay, man," quo' Dick, "we're fou' once more,
 As oft we baith hae been before."
 Then's sang again began to soar
 In tones sonorous ;
 "Come on !" cried he, while Willie swore,
 "Jine in the chorus !"

Auld Willie was an angry man,
 Again he sprung his rattle, whan
 Up stoitered's brither watchman, Dan—
 Dick's quickly nail'd,
 And, overpower'd, by two to wan,
 Awa' he's hailed.

St. Mary's tower was then in use,
 As rough-and-ready prison-house
 For those taen in midnight carouse ;
 The watchmen grin,
 "Now, maybe ye'll nae craw sae crouse,"
 Then Dick's shov'd in.

The door closed on him wi' a clang,
 "There, sing as loud's ye like ye're sang."
 Dick tried, but there was something wrang,
 The words were jumbl't,
 And eerie echoes, thick and thrang
 Frae t' rafters rumbl't.

Then high up in the ghostly tow'r
 The big bell chappit out the hour,
 'Twas maybe three, 'twas maybe four,
 I canna tell,
 But on Dick's ears it smote wi' power
 O' a death-knell.

Quo' he, "Dick Drouth, aince ye are out,
 Ye'll hae to mind what ye're about ;
 What gars ye roar, and rant and shout,
 Whan ye've a drop ?
 I'se get a muzzle for ye're snout
 Will gar ye stop !"

We know not how Dick passed the night,
 But whan the morn was dawning bright,
 The watch to see that a' was right
 Opened the door ;
 He saw the sleeping, snoring wight
 Upon the floor.

And there, abune him on the wall,
 The watchman saw an unco scrawl,
 Some stanzas, six or sae in all ;
 Will glower'd, quo' he,
 "I dae believe, upon my saul,
 It's poetry."

*"At the mid hour of night, when the stars they did shine,
 The bells in the Steeple were heard to repine :
 'It never was thought by the sons of Dundee,
 To make a vile pris'n of a fabric like me.' "**
 *

"Hae I in prison put a poet,"
Quo' Willie Ward, "and didna know it?
Some men has brains that dinna show it,
Without a doubt,
Unto his skilly trade I owe it
To lat him out."

Laigh to himsel' auld Willie laugh'd,
"'Tis but the failin' o' his craft,
Poets are either drunk or daft,
And drouthy deils—
Dootless it helps them weave their waft—
The cunnin' chieils."

Wi' that he gets the bard awake,
Wha into Willie's hand does shake—
To make amends for his mistake—
A half-a-croon,
And syne his homeward way does take,
A wiser loon.

** Tradition has it that a midnight brawler, who had been detained overnight in the Old Steeple, before his departure presented to the jailer a poem of six stanzas, of which, unfortunately, however, only the one quoted has survived.*

THE LAW.

"My foot is on my native heath."

HURRAH! each Highland Cairn and Ben,
Hurrah! each valley and each glen,
Each corrie and each bosky den—
Loud let us blaw;
But brither Scots I'd hae ye ken
About the Law!

Some be wha stray to Switzerland,
An' wi' a guide on ilka hand,
At last a-tap an' Alps they stand—
Syne hame—to blaw,
While scenery each wye as grand
Lies round the Law!

I must confess I'll no can say
Our hill's as high's a Himalay,
Or that' it's tap's perpetullay
Enswath'd in snaw,
Or that great hape o' beast o' prey
Prowl ower the Law!

Or that on tap blaws balmy breeze
A certain cure for a' disease,
Or that there's growth o' mighty trees—
There's nane ava;
Na, na, I need to tell nae lees
About the Law.

What is th' ever-potent spell
 That gars the folks pech up pell-mell?
 I'm shure that I could never tell
 What is't ava;
 I'm up three times a day mysel'—
 It's just the Law!

Fair trystin'-place for lad an' lass,
 Nae notice boards "Keep aff the grass!"
 An ideal spot in whilk to pass
 The time awa'.
 Here's auld Pattullo wi' his glass
 Upon the Law!

An' only for a penny fee
 A host o' distant things ye'll see—
 Of course ye'll no look for Dundee
 'Mang it's smoke an' a';
 Yet graund's th' view ye maun agree
 Frae aff the Law.

Auld Law! I'd laud ye to the sky,
 My pen an' no my praise rins dry—
 (The printer chiel commends that I
 Should haud my jaw.)
 I'll end wi' just anither cry
 Hurrah! the Law!



MEG MUTCHKIN'S TAVERN IN THE VAULT.

AN OLD-TIME HOGMANAY.

THE hindmost nicht o' a' the year,
The hindmost nicht—and cauld and drear,
And what a nicht o' wind and snaw
This last December, '*Thirty-twa* !
As Father Time, infirm an' auld,
Gaed hostin', hirplin' thro' the cauld.

The snell wind whis'ling up the street,
Wi' whirling wreaths o' snaw an' sleet,
Near lifted Jock Munns aff his feet.
Munns turned him slyly doon the Vault,
Maybe to 'scape the rude assault,
Maybe to pree Meg Mutchkin's malt ;
For see ! her parlour's generous glow
Lies ruddy on the untrodden snow,
And, creaking hoarsely overhead
The lion, roarin', rampant, red—
Sign maist appropriate to her trade !
Sma' heeding that the Proverb said—
"Strong drink is raging," ower the door
Stap't Munn's—as oft he'd stap't before.

Cauld, cauld without, but warm within ;
Cam' sounds o' mad and merry din,
Clatter o' tongues, and jest and chaff,
Wi' mony a loud and roistering laugh.
The meeting glasses' cheery clink,
The firelicht's friendly, cosy blink,

Invited Munn's to in and drink ;
While to the roof there rolled the chorus :

“ What tho' the years are rolling o'er us ?—
A New Year's born
At twal' the morn,
And mony mair may lie before us :
Sae let us drink
Until we sink
To Mither Earth that bore us.”

Their skins might weel been porous,
For they were drouths thus met th'gither,
Scarce sober ae New Year to t'ither,
Wha now hailed Jock Munns as a brither,
And bade him sit into the fire,
And bade him call his heart's desire,—
Nor bidding twice did Jock require.

There was auld Sergeant Tam M'Fie,
Late o' the Horse Artillerie,
Wi' but ae airm, an' but ae e'e—
Sufficed his wife to skelp and see.
And there was Billie Burt the sailor,
And next him Sandy Scott the whaler,
And it was more than Arctic snows
Which brought that redness to his nose !
And there was drucken Dan the weaver,
And drucken butcher Wullie Cleaver,
A huge and Herculean fellow,
Whose laugh was like a bullock's bellow ;
Wi' mair, wha's names I canna think,
Wha's *calling* now was just strong drink.
All sort o' men in *ae* condition—
And ladies to, for in addition,
Were twa three wenches o' that trade—
The auldest since the world was made—
In a', as crouse a companie
As you—or Meg—might wish to see.
Muckle Meg Mutchkin, wha's gleg e'e
Was oftimes turned towards the door
To see that nane gaed owre the score.

And there was—I had nigh forgotten—
 Donal' MacLaren, tink., begotten,
 And bred upon the Sidlaw Hills ;
 Wha's skin bein' fu' wi' mony gills,
 His bagpipe's bladder now he fills,
 And gie's his drone anither screw,
 And then blue-e'ed MacLaren blew
 (As still his tatter'd tribe can do).
 He blew till a' the rafters rang
 Wi' his wild wailing war-like sang ;
 He blew, and blew, until at last,
 He fairly beat the winter's blast !
 The dead, his blawin' micht hae scar'd,
 Wha sleep in lost St. Clement's yaird.
 And still he strutted, skirled, and screamed,
 Until, in very troth, it seemed,
 As he'd blaw out the winnock pane ;
 And aye he blew wi' micht an' main,
 Until to foot it some were fain ;
 The callants seized upon the lasses,
 And swung them round, and brak' the glasses ;
 E'en little Munns and Muckle Meg
 Were tempted out to shak' a leg,
 Till baith coup'd ower a brandy keg.

And now the pipes 'gan chaunt and croon,
 Then struck into anither tune—
 The Sergeant spoke—" 'Twas eighteenth June"—
 The eighteenth June—ah ! well he knew
 The pibroch played at Waterloo !

Then there arose frae a' the thrang
 Tumultuous cry, " The Sergeant's sang ! "
 The Sergeant swore he was owre auld,
 And that he'd got a touch o' cauld,
 And that his voice was out o' tune,
 And that his lungs were wearin' dune—
 (" The eighteenth June—the eighteenth June ! ")
 And that—ahem—his throat was dry—
 " Fill up the glasses, Meg ! " they cry.
 Even if there be a sang to pay—

"The Sergeant's sang!"—his sang they'll hae.
 The Sergeant drinks, then heaves a sigh,
 And heavenward turns his only eye,
 And waves his empty sleeve on high,
 Then in a voice that ance was strong
 He sings again—

"The Sergeant's Song."

When that we up and rolled awa
 To fight in the Peninsul-a,
 A regiment were we brave and braw
 As you might wish to see.
 And often did we face the foe—
 From Orthes back to Busaco :
 Our guns it was that gar't them go—
 The Horse Artillerie.

The Foot, the Line, the Cavalrie,
 All arms, all ranks, and each degree,
 But here's a health—and three times three
 To the Royal Horse Artillerie.

All up and down in sunny Spain
 The red bluid ran in floods like rain—
 O, gladly we cam' back again
 To our ain countrie.

When we came marching from the wars,
 Upon our breast the bluidy scars,
 Upon our breast ten silver bars—
 The Horse Artillerie.

And ance again—on eighteenth June,
 Our cannon growled the same old tune,
 And mony a bauld, brass-bound Dragoon
 Had cause that sound to dree ;
 And there we fought and there we fell,
 And stormed the field wi' shot and shell—
 Yea ! we had stormed at Hell hersel',
 The Horse Artillerie !

Line, Infanterie, and Cavalrie,
 All arms, all ranks, and each degree—

But here's a health—and three times three—
 To the Royal Horse Artillerie !
 To the rumbling, grumbling, humbling
 Royal Horse Artill-er-ie !

The sang ends 'midst o' loud Hurrahs !
 The Sergeant earns his *mead* o' praise—
 And drinks it to—syne sadly says,
 “ These were the days—these were the days.”
 At this, “ I think,” chirps wee Jeems Rodger,
 “ I wad hae made a d——d fine sodger,
 If my auld mithier had been willin'
 That I should list, and tak' the shillin'—
 And ceevil life is unco tame—”
 Just then in burst his angry dame,
 Wi' face afire, wi' een aflame—
 Intent to haul her husband hame.
 Before her rising wrath he reels,
 Her heavy hand on's head he feels—
 “ Ye and ye'r drucken ne'er-dae-weels !
 First-fitin ! deed I've guid a mind !
 To gie ye my fit—in behind ! ”
 Then out she bounces at the door—
 The martial Rodger meek before.
 Quo' Rab to Dan the Wabster, “ Sooth,
 Jeems car'dna for the cannon's mouth,
 But hauds his wife's in muckle ruth,”
 Dan hiccuped, “ May a' oor wives sleep sound,
 Whether abune or b'low the ground !
 But let the goblet still gang round.

For aye the sober years gang o'er us,
 Then fill the glass,
 And toast each lass—
 The wenches a' adore us ;
 And let us drink
 Until we sink
 To Mither Earth that bore us.”

Here Sandy Scott began to snore—
 And sunk at least upon the floor !

But still the lave sang o'er and o'er,
 " So let us drink
 Until we sink
 To Mither Earth that bore us."

Thus up spake Rab, " It were a pity
 The ladies shouldna gi'es a ditty,
 And so, I wad propose," cried he,
 " That Bess sings, ' Linkin' ower the Lea '."

Bess still is young, and ance was fair,
 Tho' now she's some the worse o' wear,
 And on her face stands deil-ma-care.
 And Bess will sing, tho' somewhat husky—
 Loud cries o', " Meg, bring in mair whisky ! "
 Bess puts to richt her touzled hair,
 Steadies hersel' against a chair,
 Syne in sweet voice which dims the e'e,
 She sings them

 " Linkin' ower the Lea."

As I cam' linkin' ower the lea,
 A mile or twa abune Dundee,
 All in the mornin' fair,
 The lark sang loudly in the sky—
 But nae mair blithely than did I,
 Or hauf sae free o' care ;
 My heart was licht, my fancy free,
 As I gaed linkin' ower the lea,
 As I gaed linkin' ower the lea.

As I gaed linkin' ower the lea,
 Cam' out a courtier frae Dundee,
 But he was brave and fair ;
 Wi' silver buckles on his shoon,
 And bright his sword and braw his gown,
 And his lang gowden hair ;
 Fair were the words he spake to me
 As we gaed linkin' ower the lea,
 We twa gaed linkin' ower the lea.

Nae mair I'm linkin' ower the lea,
 For he I lo'ed has lightlied me,
 And o' my heart is sair ;
 The lark still singing in the sky !
 It seemeth but to mock my cry—
 Forbear, O bird forbear !
 For he I trusted lightlied me,
 And O, I wish that I might dee—
 But for the bairnie on my knee
 O how I wish that I might dee.

"A bonnie sang—and bonnie sung,"
 Says bannetmaker Geordie Young,
 "And (*winks*) it has a moral wi' it,
 If we (*he winks again*) could see it."
 And slyly points them wi' his thoom,
 The furthest corner o' the room,
 Whaur, crackin' crouse wi' ane anither,
 The butcher and Bess slip aff th'gither.
 And noo as mony as are able—
 (For hauf lie underneath the table,
 And nane are lookin' ower stable)—
 But still a few tak' up the fable,
 And bellow out the same old chorus :

"This is the cordial will restore us ;
 Fill up the bowl
 Each jovial soul—
 What tho' the years gang o'er us—
 A New Year's born
 At twal' the morn— "

Wi' that, the merry peal which tells
 The year *is* born, from Steeple bells ;
 Upon the night it breaks and swells.
 Then mony a hearty grup and shake,
 And willie-waught for auld sake's sake,
 And mony a broken shortbread cake—
 'Mang those that are still left awake,
 For some wad sleep tho' earth should quake
 And true it is, nane o' them hears
 Mac's pæan skirlin' in their ears !

And Dan shak's hands wi' Sandy's boot
 Below the table stickin' oot !
 Syne aff they a' set to "first foot"—
 (And nane sae steady on their ain).
 Meg still can hear the loud refrain:

" A guid auld year the year's that gane,
 And may this be a better ane
 Than ony that's passed o'er us ;
 The barley bree,
 We still will pree,
 And *feel* the way afore us—
 (It's no just quite decorous)
 But let us drink
 Until we sink
 To Mither Earth that bore us,
 Then let us drink
 Until we sink
 To Mither Earth that bore us."

Quoth Mutchkin Meg wi' muckle glee,
 " It's been a Guid New Year to me."

Next morning, just at nine o'clock,
 They found ane in the auld West Dock ;
 His feet were firm fix't i' the mud,
 His glassy een were starin' wud,
 His arms were stretched above his head,
 " Drucken Dan's drown'd," people said.
 (At hame Dan's puir wife wept and prayed).

Quo' Mutchkin Meg, wi' muckle glee,
 As she drapp't *something* in her tea,
 " It's been a Guid New Year to me."

THE GREYS AT WATERLOO.

(Suggested by Lady Butler's famous picture.)

*Moments there are when mortals be as gods,
And curious gods, from battlements afar,
Perchance amazed, behold us—valiant clods—
Waging so fearlessly in fields of war.*

The shrilling note of advance,
The spur and the slacken'd rein,
The unsheath'd sabre's glance,
And the Greys thunder over the plain
(How the horses race and strain !)

Like the cry of sea-birds in storm
Comes the wail of the bullets and hum ;
In his comrade's kindly arm
Is the trumpeter smitten dumb.

The bullets' hum, and the thresh—
The sob—and the empty seat—
And a face that is formless flesh
Under the horses' feet.

The din of the pipes in their ear,
(As the drone of bees in the heather),
And the Highlanders leaping like deer,
Hanging grim by the stirrup leather.*

* *The pipers struck up, and many of the Gordon Highlanders charged with the Greys, hanging on their stirrup-leather.*

Through the smoke, where the hurtling shell
Throbs and pulsates in quivering throes,
To the very gate of hell
The old ribbon'd guidon goes !

Flinging farewell to Life—
Hurling defiance at Death—
Mad for the moment's strife—
Borne on the Battle's breath ;

Like centaurs in wild career,
With the roar of a swollen river ;
Raising loud, exultant cheer—
“ Scotland—Scotland for ever ! ”

Glorious, beyond all praise,
Their fame, the name which they made,
These men of the gallant Greys
And of Ponsonby's Union Brigade.

*May not the gods from battlements afar,
Amazed behold us—animated clods—
Serenely sweep to death on fields of war ?
Moments there be when men are like to gods.*

THE HILL BEYOND DUNDEE.

WHEN the lark is in the lift
 and the bud is on the tree,
 And the first fair flow'rs appear,
 Will you meet me on the bonnie hill
 that lies beyond Dundee,
 In the sweet Spring o' the year ?

She has met him on the bonnie hill
 that lies beyond Dundee,
 When the lark sang loud and clear,
 And the laugh was on her ruby lip,
 the love-light in her e'e,
 In the Spring time o' the year.

When the clouds were in the lift
 and the leaves upon the tree
 Were faded a' and sere,
 She wanders lone upon the hill
 that lies beyond Dundee,
 In the dowie fa' o' the year.

She makes a mane, and wrings her hands,
 and from her weary e'e
 There fa's the bitter tear ;
 "'Twas here we met, and here perchance
 he shall return to me
 In the Spring o' some glad year."

When the wind roared in the lift,
 and the snaw was on the tree,
 They hae laid her on a bier ;
 Sounds sleeps she on the bonnie hill
 that lies beyond Dundee,
 In the Winter o' the year.

THE NETHERGATE.

TO ALL WHO HAVE WANDERED
FORTH FROM OUR ANCIENT CITY
BY ANY OF ITS MANY GATES.

DEAR Street, in our dull drucken toon,
How oft I've sauntered up and doon,
And watched the Lilliputian strife,
And curious scanned the varied Life
Which surged, in full and steady spate,
Through thy deep sluice, auld Nethergate.

To bank or booth, to mill or mart,
Each proudly steps to bear his part ;
The somewhat wise ; the wholly fool ;
The simple child that goes to school—
Stylites well might meditate
*Within thy Pillars, Nethergate ! **

Frae wand'ring up and down the earth
I've sought the city of my birth,
And marked it still the same to-day
As I had never been away,
And found it Home—and blessed my fate,
That set me in the Nethergate.

To see thee when Day's funeral pyres
Burn red behind thy stately spires !
Or bathed in golden light of noon,
Or when in full flood rides the moon,
And old things are regenerate
In dear proud ancient Nethergate !

** I would inform any anxious reader that our piazza still stands where it did—on the High Street.*

To walk amid a leafy June
Wi' one whose heart-beats are atune,
While hill and howe and heaven above
Are but the background for your love !
Well, wily Cupid lies await
Not more in Nith than Nethergate !

And here he plies his curious game,
His arrows still the deadly same ;
For wenches e'en are just as bricht
To set a puir lad's heart alicht—
Aye, mony a chiel has met his mate
In homely, kindly Nethergate !

And when at last it comes to me
To quietly lay me doon and dee,
And sinfu' I, perchance make bold
To venture nigh to Streets of Gold ;
As at the unbarred Heavens I wait,
I'll think on kindly Nethergate !

GRIZZEL JAFFRAY.

THE BURNING OF THE LAST OF
THE DUNDEE WITCHES AT THE
MERCAT CROSS IN THE SEAGATE.
NOVEMBER, 1669.

"COME out, come out, Grizzel Jaffray,
For thy black gramarye ;
Come out, come out, Grizzel Jaffray,
To-day but thou maun dee.

"Come out, come out, foul witch Jaffray ;
Or e'er the nicht return,
Thy body wirried at the stake
In flames o' hell shall burn."

She's taen her aik staff in her hand,
And out-stapped to the door ;
And but and she is bowed and bent
Wi' years anigh fourscore.

"Come out, come out, Grizzel Jaffray,
Come out, come out," they cry ;
"Thy soul is barter'd to the de'il,
Thou hast the evil eye."

"O, I am bent and bow'd," quo' she,
"And dim my fading een,
Wi' length o' years that I hae lived,
Wi' sorrow I hae seen."

"Out on thee, witch Grizzel Jaffray,
Out on thy evil eye ;
Whilk gar't Roy's bairnie waste awa,
And Kirstie's coo gang dry."

And one was there who smote her cheek,
Nor did she blast nor ban ;
But said, " E'en so the soldiers smote
The blesséd Son of Man."

They have taen her to the Witches' Pool,
To see if she would droon ;
And the waters went not ower her head,
But the current bare her roun'.

" If my stout son had been at hame,
As he is on the sea,
The bauldest men amang ye a'
Had not put this shame on me."

They have taen her to the Mercat Cross,
To see if she would burn ;
And ere the flames came ower her head
A ship she did discern.

" If that were but my son's stout ship,
As it is on the sea,
There's nane the bravest o' them a',
Dare have put this death on me."

The ship has steeréd into port,
And the Captain come on shore ;
" Now tell me true, my bonnie boy,
What means this loud uproar ?

" And what was that strange licht I saw,
As I steeréd for Dundee,
Which rose and fell, beside the Cross,
As it would beckon me ? "

" Then up and spake that bonnie boy,
In tones of meikle glee,
" O, Witch Grizzel Jaffray is burned—
And I hae seen her dee !

“What aileth thee, strange Marinere ?

I fear thy look so wild !”

“Nay, little it becometh me

T’ affright a simple child.

“O, mither, had I been at hame,

As I was on the sea,

There’s nane the bravest o’ them a’

Had laid this death on thee.

“How often from the cauld and heat,

Hast thou been shield to me,

And yet from these same cruel fires

I might not succour thee !

“O, God, that their black souls may burn,

Deep, deep, in reddest hell,

Wha burnt thy body at the stake—

Sweet mother, fare-thee-well !”

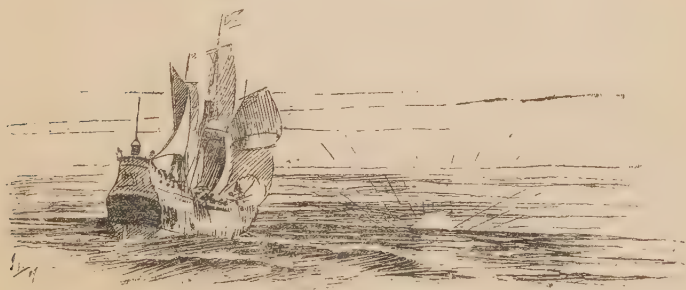
He’s put his good ship round about,

And out steered for the sea ;

And lang the years have come and gane,

But nae mair hame cam’ he.

Tradition has it that a son of Grizzel Jaffray, a master mariner, put in to Dundee with his ship on the very day of his mother’s burning, and learning what had happened, at once set sail and was never heard of again.



THE COMPLAINT OF THE OLD STEEPLE CURFEW BELL.

A MONODY IN E MINOR.

A century since I was swung,
A hundred years since I was hung,
And true and clear my tones hae rung ;
But now I'm tauld to haud my tongue,
And I maun ring no more.

To save aucht pounds—or maybe nine—
The Council formed this great design
To curb my tongue—I do opine
Their tongues are langer far than mine,
That now maun speak no more.

When Deputations ane promotes,
The gowden guineas gang like groats ;
But now, to save some puir pound *notes*,
They're stoppin' mine—the stupid stoats—
So I shall sound no more.

Each morn I've stirred folk for the strife ;
I've tauld the death o' each day's life ;
And mony a carefu', canty wife
Has set her clock by me—in Fife !
But I shall ring no more.

And mony a weary curly head
Has steek't his een, his prayers has said,
Or e'er my final strokes were sped—
How *will* the loons be got to bed
When I shall strike no more ?

And then, anither thing, forsooth !
There's mony a doylt and doited drouth
Will no ken whan to shut his mouth,
Nor barman ken to close his booth,
When I shall ring no more !

And folks in far lands forced to dwell,
Where from the mosque the Muezzin's yell
Floats ower the summer's sultry spell,
Hae sighed for sound o' Steeple Bell !—
But it shall sound no more.

The student poring ower his pages,
Scanning his ancient, crabbed sages—
The harassed heir of all the ages—
Has blessed the bell which disengages
His mind from heavy lore.

Oft has my solemn evening knell
Spoken like peaceful ave-bell,
To such—as make their bed in hell :
“ Pass shrinking soul, for all is well,
Even on the further shore.”

And now, thou could iconoclast !
Anither ancient thing is past ;
This note which sails out ower the blast,
In very truth it is my last—
Farewell ! I ring no more.

At the ELEVENTH hour.

The Council, after a' their fyking—
Just like a hive o' bees a-byking—
Have fixed me up to their ain liking—
I maunna strike—I'll gang on striking
Just as of yore !

THE GATE OF DEPARTURE.

At Panmure House, near Dundee, is the well-known Western Gate, which has not been opened since James, Fourth Earl, passed through it on his way to take part in the rising of 1715. Earl James was present at the battle of Sheriffmuir, where he was wounded and taken prisoner, being bravely rescued, however, by his brother, the Honourable Henry Maule. The incident is thus recorded :—

“ Brave Mar and Panmure
Were firm, I am sure,
The latter was kidnapt awa', man.
With brisk men about
Brave Harry retook
His brother, and laughed at them a, man.”

His Lordship was attainted, but escaped abroad, and died an exile in Paris in 1723.

O, SUN and shade, and wind and rain,
O, night and day—and death amain,
And times that shall not be again !

They parted by yon gentle mound,
Where still the mouldering urn is seen,
And all around seemed holy ground
Because of what had been :
O, rain and wind, and wind and rain,
Old times that ne'er return again.

Here first they came when as a bride
He brought her to his stately home ;
Here 'neath the trees at even-tide
The twain were wont to roam ;
O, pleasure past, O, present pain,
O, joys that ne'er shall be again.

He held her weeping on his breast,
And strove her sad heart to beguile :
“ Return we from this regal quest
In but a little while.”
O, brave hearts stilled, and stilled in vain !
O, king who ne'er shall come again.

"Adieu!" he cried, "sweet heart of luve,"
Then joined his waiting cavalcade;
But aye he turned and waved his glove,
As they rode through the glade;
O, bit, and curb, and bridle rein,
But he shall never come again.

She heard the hinges' sullen groan,
She heard the iron bar complain;
The gateway closed; she made a moan,
"Barr'd let this gate remain,
In rain and wind, in wind and rain,
Until my Luve come home again!"

The sullen clangour of the gate;
Then in her heart was shut a door;
"Alas! alack! if air or late
He should return no more?
Come darkest night—come death amain,
My Luve shall ne'er return again."

The mouldering urn, the little mound,
The gaunt gate reddening unto rust,
The pleausance, and the stately ground,
The stirring fir-trees' sombre sound—
And they, who loved—but dust—
O, sun and shade, and wind and rain,
And falling leaf, and ripening grain;
And night and day—and death amain;
And nought avails—for all is vain!

THE EXILE.

AFTER THE 45.

The straining ship stands on her way,
 Wi' bellowing sail, and slanting keel ;
 It bears me—O the waesome day!—
 Frae thee, and a' I lo'e sae weel.

The steersman peers into the haze
 And careful scans each rising licht ;
 But I cast back a longing gaze
 And watch the land die out o' sicht.

The darkness draws anowre the deep,
 And darkness fa's into my heart ;
 O ! waesome day, I sab and weep
 That we wha lo'e sae weel maun part.

The rain is drapping frae the clouds,
 The tear is drapping frae my e'e,
 The wind is sougling 'mang the shrouds—
 But, ah ! what sighs I heave for thee.

Nae kindly stars their vigils keep,
 The moon's withdrawn her siller beam ;
 But my sad soul it winna sleep,
 Or gin I sleep, I troubled dream.

The sea-maw skims its watery ways,
 Or lichtly rests upon the billow ;
 But I brood o'er departed days,
 And find nae rest upon my pillow.

Unfathomed is the mighty deep,
 Unfathomable my despair ;
 Could I a briny ocean weep
 I could not drown my sorrow there.

The troubled heavin' o' the sea
 Is like mine weary heart's unrest ;
 The low'ring clouds flee past—like me,
 They seem exiled, outcast, unblest.

The tempest roars wi' horrid din,
 The wild lights flare, the thunders roll ;
But darker far the storms within,
 The agonies that rend my soul.

The ship may make her port at last,
 And calm steal ower the troubled wave,
 And I, when a' the days are past,
 May find a calm—within the grave.

THE BIRKIE 'BUS.

When that I was a tiny boy,
 And sixpence was as rare's a "fiver"
 Well do I mind me of my joy
 To mount beside the Birkie driver.
 A crownèd King was I when thus
Enthroned upon the Birkie 'Bus.

And still abides the same old charm
 As we go by remember'd places ;
 The humble cot, the well-stock'd farm ;
 (Hear chanticleer make loud alarm !)
 The healthful wind blows in our faces,
 As Bess and Billy shew their paces ;
 Ah ! memories return to us,
 Of old times on the Birkie 'Bus.

BROCHTY FERRY: A SONG OF SUBURBIA.

"Come unto these yellow sands."—Ariel's Song in the Tempest.

WHAN City Merchants, cool an' cute,
Hae fortunes made frae jam or jute,
They flee, to 'scape the smeeek an' soot
Awa to Brochty Ferry.

To 'scape the smeeek an' but the tax,
(Our laws are shure a trifle lax).
They tak' the honey, leave the wax
These Nabobs o' the Ferry.

An' thus we see braw villas stand
Wi' whigmaleeries on ilk hand,
As raised by some enchanter's wand
Round bonnie Brochty Ferry.

The Castle—oor ain stout Gibraltar,
Lat's see the foe wad dare assault her !
I'se warrant ye we'd mak' them swalter
Wi' gun-fire frae the Ferry.

An' gin the Frenchmen try to land,
There's mines be hodden i' the sand,
Will send them clean to—Styx's strand
Blawn straught frae Brochty Ferry.

Why gang to Spas to sip the water,
To mak' ye're bodies lean or fatter,
Or add a cubit to ye're stat're ?
Just ye try Brochty Ferry.

Into the surf the bathers swarm,
The day is fair—the w-at-er's—w-w-a-r-m;
Sips o' saut Tay will work sma' harm,
 When bathing at the Ferry.

Ye Lunnon fouks, wi' muckle pride,
Doon Rotten Raw are won't to glide,
Did'st ever hae a donkey-ride
 On sands o' Brochty Ferry?

Just pey, an' mount an' ride awa',
Skelp him behind—tug at his jaw;
If he gae nae back'ard ye may craw
 Fu' crouse at Brochty Ferry.

Behold yon younglings, void o' care,
O' saft white sand build castles fair,
(Tho' but an equal fate to share
Wi' mine, that buildest i' the air)
 Natheless, lat us be merrie!

An' mony an' auld salt, frank an' free,
After lang tossin' on the sea,
Finds haven, whare he fain wad be,
 Doon by at Brochty Ferry.

Sunbrunt, an' mark'd wi' seam an' scar,
Sign o' strange journeyings afar—
Peace to them whan they cross the bar
 At last frae Brochty Ferry.

THE
WHITE LADY OF CLAYPOTTS CASTLE,

OR, THE NIGHT'S ADVENTURES OF
JOCK KINMOND, PLOUGHMAN.

WE folks wha occupy these coasts
And pride oursel's on our discernin',
Are no gien to belief in ghosts—
They tally not wi' our book-learnin' ;
Wraiths, warlocks, bogles, how we jeer them—
And yet, in truth, the maist o's fear them !

Jock Kinmond's ta'en the parting kiss,
Or maybe he's ta'en even twa—
Jock ne'er was sparing o' sic bliss—
But now he's torn himsel' awa,
And frae the farm o' Airlywight,
Set stoutly hameward through the night.

The night was no just ower bright,
The roads were onything but bonny ;
But what cared Jock—his he'rt was light,
He wadna change his place wi' ony ;
For—Bell wad be his ain ere lang,
Sae as he stapp't he crooned a sang.

She'd promised him—that very hour—
To marry at the next year's ending ;
What should he care tho' skies might lour ?
Sae, blithely on his way he's wending,
Thinkin' o' her sae trim and tight,
His lass, the maid at Airlywight.

He thocht o' the weel theekit house,
To which he'd tak' his he'rt's desire ;
He thocht o' her sae kind and crouse,
Sittin' fornent him by the fire ;
He thocht, how different frae sic heaven,
The bothy whare he now was livin' !

The twa-three acres and a coo—
The cheese and butter Bell wad make !
Pantries and presses bursting fu'
Wi' bread an' bun-stuff Bell wad bake !
And syne his fancy growin' warm—
Aspired to a weel-stockit farm.

Thus on Jock trampit to Claypotts,
By cot and farm that silent stood ;
By mony unco eerie spots,
Until he reached Balmossie Wood,
And there a sudden eldritch screamin'
At ance dispelled Jock Kinmond's dreamin' !

Jock's hair stood straucht, his he'rt stood still ;
He minded what he'd lang forgot,
How in this wood Dan Forbes did kill
The keeper wi' a sudden shot :
Nae doubt 'twas just a howlet crying—
To Jock it seemed the keeper dying !

Why Jock should rin I canna tell,
For oft he'd passed the wood before—
In's lang-drawn courtin' o' his Bell,
Maybe a thousand times or more ;
It's as I said at the beginnin'
We sneer, yet fear—behold Jock rinnin' !

The wicked flee whan nane pursue,
Conscience mak's cowards o' us a',
Jock micht, sae fest and far he flew,
Hae broke the hale Levitic Law ;
While his warst crime had been to play
At cards upon the Sabbath day.

He ran till he was like to drop,
 Till red i' face, and out o' breath—
 Then suddenly cam' to a stop ;
 " Jock, ye'r a fule, as shure as death,
 That eerie cry, I'm little dootin',
 Was naething but a hoolet hootin'."

Syne tries to banish from his mind
 A' thoughts o' a' the ghostly genus ;
 Thinks o' his love he's left behind,
 She wha to him is fair as Venus ;
 Yet often fearfu' turns his head,
 As he were dogged by the dead.

At last, auld Claypotts corbelled towers
 (Biggit, as gossip says, by Beaton).
 Jock cares nae mair for fiendish powers,
 But bed—and supper to be eaten—
 And then—his blood chills down to zero,
 For there, as imitating Hero,

The White Ladye waves from the wa',
 And to the sea looks out in sorrow,
 As she her lover back would ca'—
 Perchance he cometh on the morrow ?
 Jock waits nae mair, but wi' a roar,
 Bangs breathless through the bothy door.

" Now, what the deil is that ! " cries Dave,
 " What dae ye mean disturbin' folk ?"
 " Dave, man, I've seen the Lady wave
 Frae out a windy," shivers Jock.
 At that Dave pops his towsy head
 Under the blankets o' the bed.

**Cardinal Beaton was assassinated in 1546, and as there is still plainly visible upon two skew-put stones the dates "1569" and "1588," at which Claypotts Castle was erected and extended, it is somewhat apparent that this well-preserved piece of sixteenth century architecture could not have been built by the licentious Primate as a residence for one of his many mistresses. Consequently it must have been to some other nameless Leander that the White Lady—for we refuse to yield up the White Lady—made, and still makes her sad unanswered signalings.*

And Jock could feel the bedstead shakin',
" Dinna be fear't man, Dave," cried he,
" I'll bide"—his ain legs still were quakin'—
" Thro' thick an' thin, alang wi' ye !—
She's comin' doon—losh, wae betide me,
For heaven's sake, lat's in aside ye !"

Dave could contain himself nae langer,
Tho' unco sweer to spoil the sport,
And mair in anguish than in anger,
Cried, " Jock, ye muckle moudiwort !
What ye saw wavin' in the dark,
Was my new-scoured white Sunday sark !"



THE PILLARS.

I've stood, like Byron, on the Bridge of Sighs,
 The piazza of the Doge's Palace paced,
 But never have I chanced to clap mine eyes
 On feature architectural sae chaste
 As our ain "Pillars."

I've roamed around the ruins i' the Forum,
 I've gazed upon the pillar'd Parthenon,
 Philæ and Thebes, et cetera, I adore 'em ;
 And yet, in faith, when a' is said and done—
 Gie me "The Pillars !"

Belovèd o' the loungeer this retreat ;
 See, now he eyes the ground, now scans the sky ;
 The Pillars, how convenient when it's wet—
 The Vault, so very handy when he's *dry* !

Here may he gaze and let the toon gae bye,
 Here cheerful chew the *quid* and ruminate ;
 Here stand sae lang ye'd think he'd petrify—
 Yet a'thing comes to him wha'll only wait
 Beside "The Pillars."

Stately the Sergeant paces to and fro,
 Wi' parti-coloured ribbands in his cap ;
 Eyes keen for lads to fight the foreign foe—
 Oft has he picked up mony a likely chap
 (*To mak' 'em killers !*)
 Around "The Pillars."

Some stout auld voter, mindfu' o' the Poll,
 Comes briskly stappin' doon the toon to see
 If his name still is printed on the Roll—
 He fingers doon A, B, and C, and D,
 A' round "The Pillars."

Look, and behold the Councillors gang in ;
 Listen ! they'll sune fa' out an' disagree—
 Your lug to the door, do'st hear the dreadful din?—
 O' our poor, patient Municipalitie—
 These are the *Pillars* !

Hark, how the hubbub rises high and higher,
 Bandyng o' words, and brawlings and abuse ;
 Someone ca's someone else " Confounded liar !"—
 If S— were Samson, sure he'd pull the house
 Doon by its pillars !

But look ! whare yon puir love-sick wight doth wait,
 And anxious scan the Town-Clock's sonsie face ;
 Ah, joy ! she comes—tho' near twa minutes late !—
 For centuries thou'st been a trystin' place—
 O' auld grey Pillars !

And see thee on the nicht o' Hogmanay !
 Crowded wi' cronies, each his bottle ready ;
 The clock strikes twal ! They drink, and cry " Hurrah !"
 Whan aff they reel, their pins are no' sae steady
 As thy stout Pillars !

Thou staunch auld Pillars ! here for mony a day
 Thou'lt proudly stand, our ancient city's shrine,
 Whan I, and all who tak' thy sheltered way,
 Have passed into a vaster vault than thine—
 Thou grey auld Pillars !

And whan frae a' earth's fardels we are free,
 And through the fair Elysium lightly range,
 'Mid gates o' gold, and plinths o' porphyry—
 I'm thinkin' that we'll find it unco strange
 Without the Pillars !



ON BALGAY HILL
THERE GROWS
THE BEECH.

ON Balgay Hill there grows the beech,
On Balgay Hill there grows the birk,
Whare me and my luvè went to meet
Betwixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

On Balgay Hill grows beech and birk,
On Balgay Hill grows ash and oak,
'Twas there twixt gloamin' and the mirk
That mony a soft fond word he spoke.

O, Balgay Brae's bedeckèd fair
Wi' mony a sweet perfumèd flow'r;
My luvè pu'ed garlands for my hair,
As quickly sped the careless hour.

He pointed to the rowan tree,
Wi' clustering berries, ripe and red,
And as he pu'ed and ga'ed to me,
"Thy lips are redder, luvè," he said.

He pointed me the evening star
That peer'd the bowering leaves between,
And swore its radiance fainter far
Than the bright glinting o' my e'en.

He pointed me whare by the toon
The river rowed sae full and free ;
“ Even as that stream in flude comes doon,
So full and strong my luve for thee.”

Shine on thou silent evening star,
The dark and shudd’ring leaves between,
Thy beams are no so bright by far
As saut tears swelling in my e’en.

Shine out thou cauld and cruel toon,
And row swift river to sea,
O, little wad I care how soon
Thy waters wild were over me.

On Balgay Hill grows beech and birk,
On Balgay Hill grows ash and oak,
’Twas there twixt gloamin’ and the mirk
He met me wha his troth has broke.

The cypress grows on Balgay Hill,
Dark cypress and the drooping yew,
And O, that I was lying still
Wi’ a’ my weary wand’ring through.

O, foolish love sae quick to go,
O, foolish heart sae quick to twine ;
Had I but known what now I know,
He ne’er had gotten love o’ mine.

O, foolish heart sae quick to trust,
O, wilful will sae quick to bend,
Would that my head were happ’d in dust,
And a’ my cares were at an end.

THE STORMING OF THE OLD STEEPLE.

WITH THE SIEGE AND SACKING OF
DUNDEE BY MONCK IN 1651, AND
GOVERNOR LUMSDAINE'S HEROIC
STAND IN THE TOWER.

Ho! stout and staunch, with high-flung crown,
How proudly still thou lookest down,
Old grey Tower, on this grimy town.
And children play within thy shade ;
There, bending low, one little maid,
A pure and snow-white floweret culls
From this that was a place of skulls.

A drowsy mason with his mall,
Chips softly at the sunny wall—
Smitten long since by murd'rous ball !

Two laughing girls grope up the stair,
And stumbling on me unaware—
Where in the niched loop-light I sit,
With locks ablown, with brows beknit,
Beating my brains for words to fit—
Start back aghast, as sore afraid
That they had seen some sombre shade.

And shadows well might haunt this place,
For here within, the walls show trace,
In blotch and blot, fire-burnt, smoke-black,
Of bloody siege and storm and wrack ;
And at the foot of this old keep
A thousand nameless dead do sleep.

This is the tale :—

Cromwell and Charles
Are fighting out their bloody quarrels,
And Monck is left, with mighty hand,
To pacify, or plague Scotland,
In the old way we know so well—
With mine and mortar, shot and shell—
To bring the troublous towns to reason—
For what is loyalty in season,
A day or two may turn to treason ;
And he whose cry was “ Kirk and King,”
Had best find ither sang to sing.
E'en Monck, who helped a King to slay,
Re-made a Monarch in a day.

A soldier stout and stubborn, he
Who now lays leaguer to Dundee ;
Tho' hard and harsh, honest and hale,
And wont, when few fair words may fail,
To try if war will not prevail.

And staunch and faithful in his way—
To such as promise fullest pay—
Mere mercenary on a mighty scale,
Who sought, perhaps, if truth were told,
To take this last Scottish stronghold—
Not more for glory than for gold.

For seeking sanctuary in Dundee
Came many a Royalist refugee,
With golden coins and silver pots—
Twa million-and-a-halfe pounds Scots.
(And Monck's men when they'd done their duty,
Right quickly fell upon the booty,
And laid these earthly treasures up—
The silver can, the silver cup—
Thinking or caring not a jot,
That moth and rust might quickly rot).*

* Much of this spoil having been shipped, the vessels were lost within sight of the town—the sailors apparently being as drunk as the soldiery. “ Ill got, soon lost,” says Monck's chaplain, Gumble. “ A man may Rob God with a jeaft, but he fhall be Plagued in Earneft.”

Monck's message then to the defenders,
Was short and curt—asks their surrenders.
To which Lumsdaine straight makes reply—

Here do we stand to do or die.†
Further demands th' besiegers bring,
Their arms, and bear them for the King ;
And to all such as may submit,
Makes promise of a free permit ;
“ This done, I am your friend again,
In the old manner—Yours Lumsdaine.”

Monck's moralising chaplin, Gumble,
Thinks this epistle aught but humble,
And marvels much one thus could write,
Being placed in a so parlous plight.*

No further parley Monck employs—
Despising his foe ere he destroys ;
“ Better men's flesh than bastion—
The horse and foot will now fall on.”

No records show what deeds were done
Under that old September sun ;
We know that blood in rivers ran,
That once again man murdered man,
As ah ! how oft since Cain began.

† To Monck's demand for surrender, General Major Robert Lumsdaine of Montquhanie, then in command of the city, replied in the following terms :—“ We received yours. For answer therunto, we by these acquaint you, that we are commanded by the King's Majesty to desire you and all officers, soldiers, and ships, that are at present in arms against the King's Authority, to lay down your arms, and to come in and join with His Majesty's forces in this Kingdom, and to conform and give obedience to His Majesty's declaration sent you herewith ; which if they will, then we shall continue, Sir, your faithful friend in the old manner. —Robert Lumsdaine.”

* Says Gumble (*Life of General Monck*) :—“ Which was an arrogant Presumption, an impertinent piece of Gallantry at that time to tender safety to them, that were able to give ; and that did much irritate the Besiegers, so that presently they fall to work with the town.”

When Helen set the ancients by the ears,
The siege of Troy dragged somewhat it appears.
Monck took ten days—Menelaus took ten years—
And not by wooden horse it came to pass
That Dundee fell—but by an ass !

A little lad played on the wall,
In sight of sleepy sentinel ;
And one fine day the sorry scamp
Strayed o'er the lines into Monck's camp.
Who sent him thus—or love, or hate,
I cannot tell—perchance 'twas fate ;
But being there he told a tale
Of soldiery who swilled the ale,
Looked on the wine when it was red,
In early morn, while yet abed ;
Drowning their sorrows in the bowl,
Thankful their wine-soaked skins were whole,
Till sorrows, if not drowned, were drenched
By noon, long ere their thirsts were quenched.

Monck doubtless paid the lad some half a-crown,
Then took the hint—thereafter took the town !
And once again each soldier burns and ravages—
(Sans uniform, we had but called them savages!)
And all the town is dead and desolate,
From Western barras to the Eastern gate,
Before the weary swords are satiate.
And in the dead-strawed Thorter Raw,
Monck's mad and ribald soldiers saw
A sight which stayed their hands with awe ;
A little babe whose lips still press'd
Her murder'd mother's ice-cold breast.
(The arms still shelter'd and caress'd).

And in that last and dreadful hour,
When heavy clouds of doom did lower,
The dauntless Lumsdaine held the Tower.
And none of all Monck's men might dare
To face him on that fearful stair—
A wounded lion in his lair.

They take the shorter, safer plan,
As for a rodent, not a man.
Up through each crevice curls the smoke,
Like hand malignant stretched to choke,
And from the Tower comes mighty cry,
Strong men curse Monck—and God—and die.
And in the blackness was there seen no way—
The pillar'd cloud being with them night and day *

And so heroic hearts did not avail,
And so comes to an end the sad old tale—
A noble head struck on an iron nail.

A GREAT BELL hid within the Tower,
Speaks hoarsely out the passing hour,
As from the wind-kiss'd top I go
To join the varied life below ;
Much musing whither all things tend,
And if the gods will condescend
Something of answer at the end.

**Lumsdaine having surrendered, was treacherously shot, but whether with or without Monck's knowledge, it is not now easy to say. His head was thereafter stuck on a spike on one of the crocketed pinnacles of the Tower, where it remained for many years.*

DIRCK JOHNSTON'S FAREWELL.

On the outskirts of the town and to the north-west of the Strips of Craigie, a somewhat gloomy spot still bears the name of The Gallow's Hill. This I have imagined as the scene of the death of Dirck Johnston, Highwayman.

Dirck Johnston's Fast Hiding.

Mirk was the nicht, the mune was hid,
And the wild winds were abroad,
As mounted on his coal-black steed
Dirck Johnston took the road.

For with bitter laugh Dirck did avouch
This as the golden rule :
"That none need go lean of paunch or pouch
While so many there be gan full."

He has lichted doon by the blasted oak,
That stood on the barren land ;
And up cam' spurrin' three gentle folk—
And but Dirck gar'd them stand.

Twa gentlemen and a ladye fair,
As brave as they might be ;
"This way," said Dirck, "ye may not pass,
Till ye've paid the toll to me."

He has taken tribute from the twain,
Their silver and their gold ;
Then bow'd full low to the ladye fair—
For Dirk was a gallant bold.

"Not the rings o' gold frae thy finger-tips,
 Nor the jewel frae thy hair,
 But ae touch o' thy ruby lips
 Micht I hae my ladye fair?"

Forth he has stepped—syne backward fa'en,
 As ane bereft o' life,
 For this was she, had the fates been kind—
 That should have been his wife.

"O, is it thou, dear Dirck," she said,
 "Alack, and woe betide!"
 Ane o' the twain has drawn his blade,
 And stricken him i' the side.

They hae bound him on his coal black steed,
 An' in rade to Dundee;
 And the Court has decreed that he maun hing
 Upon the gallows-tree.

Dirck Johnston's Farewell.

"Oft hae I rade thro' Dundee toon,
 In the wind but and the rain;
 But I never rade thro' Dundee toon,
 Ne'er to return again.

"Oft, bounden in the bonds o' luv,
 I've rade my luv to meet;
 But ne'er wi' irons on my hands,
 And fetters on my feet.

"Oft hae I rade this welcome way,
 My ain true luv to see;
 But I never rade this weary way,
 To the place whare I should dee.

' O, little did my father think,
When he swung me on his knee,
That I should come to swing in chains
Upon yon gallows-tree.

" O, little did my mither dream,
As I hung upon her breast,
That my banes upon this blacken'd beam
Should share the wind's unrest.

" Oft hae I stood upon this hill,
And seen the sun gae down ;
But ne'er I thocht, that, dark and chill,
My sun should set at noon.

" Oft hae I seen the sun gae doon
Upon baith sea and shore,
But I never saw a sun gae doon,
And it should rise no more.

" Farewell, fair day ; farewell, calm night ;
Farewell, all pleasant places ;
Farewell, farewell, each wild delight ;
Farewell, familiar faces.

" Farewell, that would have been my bride—
If fate had been more kind ;
Farewell all others that I loved,
And now maun leave behind.

" Farewell, my saddle and my spurs ;*
Farewell, my coal-black steed ;
Were my free hand but on thy main,
Thou still would serve my need.

* *The crest of the Johnstons is a wingèd spur.*

"Thou honest Judge and jury a',
Wha sat upon my sin,
Farewell ; I robbed without the law—
Thou still rob on within !

"Farewell, farewell, had fates been kind
That might have been my wife ;
My foes, farewell—I scorn them now
In death, as aye in life.

Farewell !"



The Johnston Arms.

Nunquam non paratus.
Never unready.

THE AULD MERCAT CROSS.

O' a' the nichts o' a' the year
 'Twas Christmas Eve, time o' guid cheer,
 Whan, having dinner'd wi' a friend,
 Saunders sets out to's hame to wend,
 And having supped, tho' well, not wisely,
 Is feeling, weel no just precisely
 Fou', but somewhat "elevate"
 As he comes doon the Nethergate ;
 His staps imprinted i' the snaw,
 Now aff the walk, now to the wa',
 Proclaim the spell o' Usquebaugh !

'Twas twal o'clock—St Margaret's Tower,
 An' Toon House chimes had tauld the hour :
 Tam listening, counted "*twenty-fower*."
 "Losh keeps !" quo' he, "Withouten doubt,
 This is the latest I've been out !"
 An' ruefu' thocht what lay before—
 His wife's lang tongue, or lockit door !
 Syne cheerfu' growin', cried "Hoot, toot !
 A little rift within the lute !"
 (At hame, his wife cried loud, "The brute !")

As, pondering ower his waefu' failin',
 An' how to meet his mate's assailin',
 Tam lean'd against the Auld Kirk railin',
 A voice within said, "Tam, I'm thinkin'
 That ower muckle ye've been drinkin'."

Tam turned him round—Wha could it be ?—
 Glow'r'd thro' the gloom but didna see—
 What some he'd fear'd—his ain guid-wife—
 Nor any ither sign of life ;

Sae he was feelin' at a loss
 Whan's e'en lit on the Mercat Cross,
 Whareon there sat that well kenn'd feature,
 The Unicorn, fabulous creature,
 Perch'd on its post like Simon Stylite,
 Daniel, or sic like anchorite,
 Wi' face as solemn as the Sphinx,
 But as Tam looks, an e'elid winks—
 An' once again, "Man Tam, I'm thinkin'
 That ower muckle ye've been drinkin'."
 "It's you," gasp'd Tam, syne made reply,
 "A drop or twa I'll no deny—
 The nicht was damp, an'—I was dry."
 "Weel, Tam, if ye've na had enough—
 There stands a well, and there a trough"—
 (Tam Saunders only hiccup'd "Ugh!")
 "Ah! Tam could it be given thee
 To see thysel' as I can see!
 An' wad ye hae advice fae me,
 Ye'd tak' nae stronger drink than—tea."
 Tam spake na. Thus the Unicorn,
 "I dinna mean to blaw my *horn*,
 But centuries ere ye war born
 I've stood here in the market place
 An' seen drink work dool and disgrace.
 Tho', mind, on gala days, lang syne,
 My gargoyles gurgled bluid red wine!"
 Here Tammass pricking up his lugs,
 Quickly sly *cornu* passed to Jougs,
 Branks-bridle, Cuck-stule, Pillorie,
 The Headsman's block, an' Gallows-tree.
 An' mony an ancient tale he told,
 Of jade, an' termagant, an' scold,
 (Tam inly blessed thae days o' old)
 Forced to the Cross upon their knees,
 To mak' confession, "Tongue she lees."

Of Grizell Jaffray, burned for witch,
 The very day upon the which
 Her son cam' sailing up the river,
 Wha straightway sailed awa' for ever.

Of ane John Anderson wha did
 Draw's whinger on ane Archie Kyd—
 Which being maist strictly forbid,
 The whinger's set i' the Cuck-stule,
 To brand the bravo as a fule.

Of Captain Crichton an' the Pirate
 I' the East Indies, somewhat irate,
 Till tauld o' auld Cross o' Dundee,
 Whan ; " We be townsmen, thee an' me,
 Set skipper, ship, an' cargo free !" *

Of the planted " Tree o' Libertie,"
 Which still in Belmont ye may see.

Of moan made here for Fight at Flodden ;
 Of jubilee after Culloden.

(They gae the Freedom o' the Borough
 To Cumberland, for's wark sae thorough).

Exploits o' Bailies—bellowsmenders ;
 Pageants o' Princes an' Pretenders ;
 Of beacons blazing, bonfires burning ;
 Then Unicorn, facetious turning,
 Tells how the the burgers o' Dundee,
 Failing his lang stane tail to see—
 (It's curled up round the shield in front)—
 Hung ane behind like a kail-run !
 Syne adds, " My sermon against ale
 Seems also turn'd into a tale."

**In the year 1750, Captain Crichton, of Dundee, was captured by Angria, the famous East India pirate, who put the following questions to him :—*

Angria—" Where do you originally come from ?"

Crichton—" From Dundee, in Scotland."

Angria—" Ay! ay! from Dundee!! Then pray where does the Cross of Dundee stand ?"

Crichton—" Near the west end of the large square, opposite the new Townhouse."

Angria—" How many steps are in it ?"

Crichton—" Six steps and all go round about it."

Angria—" Quite right."

Having asked some other questions which were answered satisfactorily, the pirate said, " Well, Captain Crichton, because we are townsmen, I give you your liberty and your ship in a present."

The Unicorn ceased. Tam gazed
Up an' around him, some amazed.
Aboon, the Steeple clock struck twa,
"Sure, I've been sleepin' in the snaw,
A blessing that it cam' nae thaw.
The tale ! Can I hae dreamed it a' ?"

Wi' that he rose, an' stoiter'd hame,
Dreadin' to meet his angry dame,
An' thinkin' wha on to lay the blame !

Mysel', I carena what it be
Gif he but blame na—Joseph Lee.



“THE FIFIE.”

“‘There was a ship,’ quoth he.”—The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere.

O’ a’ the ships that sail the sea,
 The strangest far bekenn’d to me,
 Is that fair craft—an’ nane but she—
 Sae justly famed,
 That plies ’twixt Newport an’ Dundee—
 The “Fifie” named.

I’ve seen a wheen o’ curious craft—
 Dhow’, dahabeah, ’dola, raft,
 O’ various build an’ different draught—
 Yea, mony a barque,
 But never heard o’ thing sae daft
 Since Noah’s ark.

’Twad tax a landsman to discern
 Whare lies her stem an’ whare her stern ;
 A thing whilk I could never learn,
 Tho’ sair I’ve tried—
 It’s said that she can tak’ a turn
 Wi’ her broadside.

Her speed is onything but slow—
 Sametimes six knots an hour or so ;
 The grass has little time to grow,
 Things fairly hum—
 Yet twa young men no lang ago
 Got out an’ swum !

The folks upon the upper deck
 Keep pacing on wi’ ne’er a check,
 As they were walking neck-an’-neck
 For wage or wagers,
 Wi’ airs an’ gestures mony feck—
 Just like Drum-Majors.

* * * * *

Behold the "Fifie" stem the Tay,
And score o' Newport sancts convey
To hear some city parson pray
 In church on Sunday—
A miracle indeed if they
 Arrive by Monday !

For dangers lie on every hand,
An' if she shudna chance to strand
Upon some hidden bank o' sand,
 Then a'most certain,
A fog fa's doon an' hides the land
 Wi' sable curtain.

An' when there's naething else the matter,
Be sure there's no eneugh o' water
Alangside o' the pier to lat her—
 The folks gang wud,
Ashore when they hae got to splatter
 Thro' a' the mud !

Fareweel, auld "Fifie," gang your ways,
An' heedna what my mad muse says,
Some ither day she'll sing thy praise
 Wi' pen an' tongue,
An' loud panegyrics will raise
 To Captain Young !

IN EMMIC WOODS.

FADED, and withered, and brown,
 The leaves to the ground are cast,
 As flags that come fluttering down,
 When the pomp and the pageant are past.

Frail parchments, whereon are scrolled
 Strange sagas, and sad, of the year;
 Hieroglyphics that hold
 Hints of fates that we hope for—or fear.

This power, ye might not withstand,
 Did it stem each sinuous thread
 And straw ye carelessly over the land
 To be crushed into nought by our tread?

As flags that come fluttering down,
 When the pageantry is past;
 Withered, and faded, and brown,
 The leaves on the ground are cast.

CLOSE OF DAY: DEN OF MAINS.

The crescent moon shews like a bended bow,
 Sending its shafts against the sinking sun;
 A crimson cloud lies 'thwart the golden glow,
 Like life-blood of the dying day whose course is run.

Yet on the morrow they again do meet,
 These ancient adversaries Night and Day;
 Alternate vanquished, they own not defeat—
 Nor shall, until the firmament doth fade away.

THE ESPLANADE.

"'Tis a long lane that hasn't got a turning."

I'VE walked the ancient Appian Way,
In Watling Street I used to stray,
I've *waded* miles o' miry clay
Laid out by Gen'ral Wade,
Macadam, Telford—still I say
Gie me the Esplanade !

O, mony hae tried to extend it,
Some wad hae it straught, an' some wad bend it—
The siller they did sair misspend it—
I'm aften some afraid,
Unless the pow'rs aboon forfend it
They'll spoil the Esplanade.

Come whiffs an' blasts o' blessed ozone,
Whenever ye but shove ye'r nose on—
The seats are just a treat to doze on—
Ye muses gi'es ye'r aid—
I'd write a book, if but I chose, on
The glorious Esplanade.

Alang its length pedestrians stalk,
Faddist and hypochondriac ;
This is the city's "Lovers' Walk"—
Full mony a man an' maid
Hae tauld love's tale an' heard sweet talk
Doon by the Esplanade.

An' by guid luck perhaps ye'll chance
Some nicht on an alfresco dance—
See how they wheel, retire, advance,
 To melodian deftly play'd—
The poet's sel's ta'en mony a prance
 Around the Esplanade.

Behold yon cyclist proodly flee,
Wi's head in air, his hands on knee,
His mien proclaimin', "Look at me!
 Was ere sae bauld a blade?"
Guid-sakes! he's slap intil a tree
 Upon the Esplanade!

(I'm no just shure aboot thae trees,
They seem a wee bit ill at ease—
Is't rope, or railin', or saut breeze?
 They're neither big nor braid—
Perhaps they're sort o' Japanese
 Grows on the Esplanade).

I find I hav'na space to dwell
On a' its beauties, or to tell,
About the Brig—the Tay—Ninewell,
 But shure enough I've said
To mak' ye tak' a walk ye'rsel
 Along the Esplanade!

“THE DEEVIL AND DUNDEE.”

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben !
 O, wad ye tak' a thought an' men' !
 Ye aiblins might—I didna ken—
 Still hae a stake—
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake !—*BURNS.*

The deil drappit doun abune Dundee,
 He'd heard weel o' the place—and cam' to see ;
 Sae he squatt'd himsel' upon the “ Law”
 An' lookit—an' this is what he saw :—

A city situat' sae fine an' fair
 Few toons in Scotland wi't might compare ;
 But shrood'd in sulphurous smoke an' soot—
 (Things essential baith to weavin' o' jute).

An' a wastly wind cam' out o' Lochee,
 An' the smut smote sharp i' the deil his e'e,
 An' season'd an' cured as he'd been wi' smoke
 Auld Cloutie himsel' was near like to choke.

Quo' the deil, “ I maun hae a nearer view—”
 A hap-stap-an'-loup—syne in air he threw
 Himsel' in awesome somersaultin' turn,
 And aloot just ayont the Scouringburn.

Then Auld Hornie set out upon his stroll,
 An' saw mony feck o' things that were droll ;
 Sichts unco sad—sichts unco risible—
 (The deil, ye maun ken, bein' strictly invisible).

He saw there officials bribbit and bought,
An' councillors wha serve nae the Lord for nought,
An' clergy wha live in comfort an' ease,
While the nine and ninety do just as they please.

He saw courtyards devoid o' licht an' air,
Whare curses went up wi' Salvationist pray'r;
To each hundert hovels a public-house
Whare 'spirits' waur nor himsel' were lootin loose.

He saw schules whare the children cam' underfed,
While the parsons were preachin' o' "Heavenly bread";
He heard bairns greet their few minutes o' life
Ere they steekit their een an' were dune wi' the strife

He saw murky mills whare for pittance o' food
Each worker was weavin'—a Hessian shroud—
A' these things an' mair the deevil he saw,
Till he 'gan to wish himsel' weel an' awa.

Then he cam' to the statue o' puir Rab Burns;
The deil but he stands—the deil but he turns,
While a tear stood high i' his auld wrunkl'd e'e—
"Sae this is the lad that was wae for me.

"An' this is the lad that wad hae me mend—
Weel deil tak's if I dunna mak' fecht to attend."
Then the deil took a loup baith lightsome and hie
Clean ower the "Auld Steeple"—an' out o' Dundee.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE TREES AT THE AULD STEEPLE

ON THE WANTON CUTTING
DOWN OF THEIR FELLOWS.

Why—cumbereth it the ground?

It chanced that in this year o' grace,
The Kirks resolved redd up their place—
Which lieges swore was a disgrace
 To our auld toon;
So first they pointed a' the stones,
And hod awa' some upturned bones,
And, after mony grunts and groans,
 They took the railin' doon.

Now, few wad *rail* or find a faut,
If they had been content wi' that—
Sure were we that at least they'd lat
 The auld trees grow;
But some deil wi' a thirst for order
Fand some o' us were owre the border,
And wi' a hard heart big wi' murder
 He laid us low.

And this same dull ill-farrant devil,
In rule o' thumb wha seemed to revel,
Went dancin' round wi's spirit-level
 And survey cable;
He smoothed out every gentle mound,
'Neath which the dead were sleepin' sound,
And spaded a' the holy ground,
 Smooth as a billiard table.

The trees round which the bairnies played,
 The trees which aince cast gratefu' shade,
 And this a little Eden made,
 Were owre auld ;
 See in their place a puckle shoots—
 Just like a row o' raw recruits—
 A cuddled round about wi' cloots
 Against the cauld.

While we stand here i' frost an' sleet,
 (Just at the foot o' Barrack Street,)
 Sair troubled wi' puir frozen feet,
 And blasts that chill us ;
 For they hae left exposed our roots—
 The gardener fallow says " Hoot, toots,
 A tree wears neither hose nor boots "—
 The fact is, we hae little doots
 They want to kill us !

Now by cam' twa three artist chiels,
 And faith, but they waxed hot as deils ;
 Cried ane, " I wonder how it feels
 To be a tree !"
 " Wha cut these down," anither said,
 " Kens how it feels, I'm some afraid,
 To hae at least a *wooden* head
 And squintin' e'e !"

And ane—I think his name was Lee,
 No much gi'en to profanity,
 Cursed till the air grew sulphurie :
 " The sorry loon !
 If but I kenn'd wha 'twas," cried he,
 " I'd hang him to the highest tree—
 And that the Philistines might see—
 Wad gie him just a month to dee,
 Then cut HIM down !

THE MEADOWS.

A flowrie howm, between twa verdant braes,
Where lasses used to wash and spread their claes.

Come, Meg, let's fa' to wark upon this green,
The shining day will bleach our linen clean ;
The water's clear, the lift's unclouded blue
Will mak' them like a lily wet wi' dew.

—*The Gentle Shepherd.*

Ah, there's the *Rub*.—*Hamlet.*

SOME folks wad mak' an unco wark
'Bout thisna pleausance, thatna park ;
To them I tak' leave to remark,
We've aye the Meadows.

So aince again my harp is strung,
And, certes, I'll no haud my tongue
Until at least ae sang I've sung
About the Meadows.

Was ever sweeter, cleaner claes,
Than thae each proud housewife displays ;
They mind me o' the early days
Within the Meadows.

When mony a lass, like Ramsay's Peg,
Stood in her tub, and showed a leg
As white and polished as an egg,
Within the Meadows.

But damsels now-a-days wad deem,
Such things immodest it micht seem—
Weel, washin's maistly dune by steam,
Even in the Meadows.

In these auld days was set a watch
On yon wee hill, night-birds to catch,
Wha cam' the bleachin' claes to snatch—
Frae aff the Meadows.

And this same midget molehill mound,
So mightily encircled round,
Wi' railings cost some hundred pound,
Within the Meadows !

Your learned antiquarian tells
O' witches' knowe and fearsome spells—
'Twas but the delvings frae the wells
Dug i' the Meadows !

Look, whare yon sturdy poacher chieles
Are sortin' out their nets and reels,
To lay the rabbits by the heels
In some puir farmer's meadows.

And some their humble meals are eating,
And some are busy carpet-beating—
Hark ! Jock, impaled on railing, greeting !
Within the Meadows.

And there, twa cronies, auld and dune,
Sit dozing in the Western sun,
Wha's course, like theirs, is nearly run.
Alas ! green Meadows.

And when these auld folks come to dee,
They'll no object, it seems to me,
Altho' Elysium should be
Just like the Meadows.

POWRIE'S BRAES.

A Fotheringham of Powrie escaped from Edinburgh Castle after the '45, and in exile in Italy, experiencing "the notorious justice of this rascally country," wished himself again "on the cold slopes of the Sidlaws."

It's O, and it's O, for my ain Countrie,
 Ochone ! and Ochone ! for my ain Countrie;
 O, what wad I no do
 And what wadna gie,
 For ae bonnie blink o' my ain Countrie ?

O, what to me this sunny land
 Wi' a' its sculptur'd stones ?
 Gie me the ruggéd, riven rock
 Whare the lone whaup wheels and moans;
 The wild wind and the weeping mists,
 The burnies bounding free,
 And my biggin' on the bare bleak braes
 In my ain Countrie !

It's O, and it's O, for my ain Countrie,
 Ochone ! and Ochone ! for my ain Countrie;
 There's miles and miles o' weary waste
 And warlds o' swelling sea
 Betwixt me and a sicht o' my ain Countrie !

O, here is music saft and sweet
 Frae viol and guitar,
 But ae kenn'd sound I never hear
 That I lo'e better far ;
 Had I but hand upon my pipes
 I' faith I'd lat them see ;
 The screaming, war-like chant
 O' my ain Countrie !

It's O, and it's O, for my ain Countrie,
 Ochone ! and Ochone ! for my ain Countrie;
 The piercing pibroch's warning wail,
 The tartan streaming free,
 At the gathering o' the clans for war, in my
 ain Countrie !

O, here is mony a palace fair,
 And mony a sanctly shrine,
 Wi' soft bells seeking me to prayer
 Frae Matins to Compline ;
 But I canna worship here,
 And I winna bend the knee
 Until the Lord shall lat me hame
 To my ain Countrie !

It's O, and it's O, for my ain Countrie,
 It's O, and it's O, for my ain Countrie,
 The Castle, and the little cot
 Beneath the lonely tree—
 O God ! for just ae ither sicht o' my ain
 Countrie !

The ladies here are rich and rare
 Wi' their soft southern smiling,
 And a' the wiles o' womankind
 Gi'en them for man's beguiling ;
 But they are a' but phantoms pale
 To my dear dead ladye,
 Wha sleeps sae sound beneath a hill,
 In my ain Countrie.

My ain Countrie, O, my ain Countrie,
 It's O, and its O, for my ain Countrie,
 O, lichtly wad I thole exile—
 Yea, gladly wad I dee,
 For ae brief hour o' bypast life in my ain
 Countrie.

THE CASTLE OF MAINS.

A BALLAD OF THE CRUEL AND JEALOUS
MURDER BY GILCHRIST, EARL OF
ANGUS, OF HIS LADYE, THE SISTER OF
KING WILLIAM THE LION OF SCOTLAND.

The Prologue.

HERE is the little fairy glen,
And, ah! how small the change since when
As careless truant lads from school,
We found its waters wondrous cool.

Here is St. Ninian's Wishing Well,
Whare Winnie wish't, but wouldna tell.

And here the kirkyaird on the bank,
Wi' matted grasses, lang and rank ;
Wi' mony a rude, uneven mound,
And mould'ring wrack strewn a' around ;
Might seem as if the lonely stones
Sought burial beside the bones.

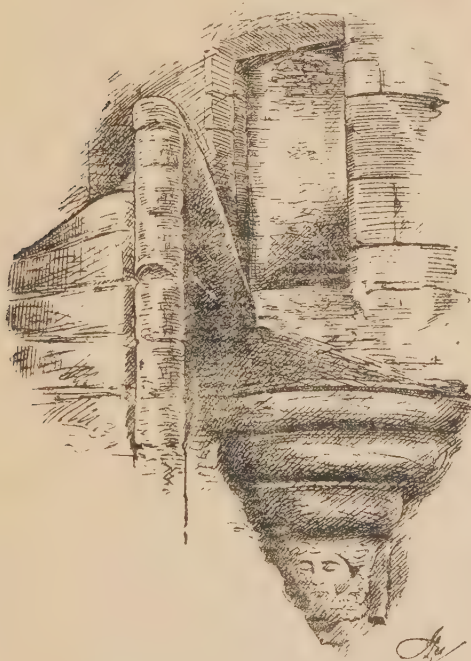
Here I, when once the hour was late,
Would fearful peer within the gate,
And wonder of the dead folk's fate.

—And she was young, and she was fair,
Wi' big blue e'en and gowden hair ;
And he a good stout sword did wear.

Here is the gaunt, grey, hungry tow'r,
The relic of a bypast pow'r ;
Built by the Graham, wha got sma' thanks
For the business o' the "Spanish Blanks"
(Ane o' your auld-time papish pranks).*

* *Sir David Graham, Lord of Mains Castle, beheaded in 1593, for his complicity in the papish plot, known as the "Spanish Blanks."*

Within the gloomy, ghostly place,
 Then do I sit me down to trace
 A stony, staring, Gorgon face—
 That glow'rs from off the stairway wall,
 And to my mem'ry doth recall
 The story of a ruder age
 Told in old Hector Boece his page.



Above, the gently-cooing doves
 Are telling o'er their happy loves ;
 But, while I ply my pencil there,
 One with long, lank Medusa hair,
 Glides wailing down the broken stair,
 And o'er my shoulder to my book
 With wistful, wild eyes seems to look ;
 And as the old sad mem'ries throng,
 I make not picture—but a song—

The Ballad.

The ladye stood on the castle wa',
To see what she might see,
And there she spy'd the Black Wanlass,
Come riding frae Dundee.

"Come down, come down, my bonny burd,
Come down, and let me in,
For Gilchrist Earl, your lord is dead,
And I fain your love wad win."

"Ye lie, ye lie, ye Black Wanlass,
Sae loud's I hear ye lie ;
And but and if my lord were dead,
I wad hae nae words with thee."

And by there stood her fause maiden,
Her fause maiden, Marjorie ;
"Now, Marjorie, tak thy lady's bracelet,
And fling it down to me."

She has taen her lady's gowd bracelet,
Whare it lay on the Castle wa',
And flung it down to the Black Wanlass,
Wha mark't whare it did fa'.

He has caught it on his guid sword point,
And put it on his hand,
And mounted him on his dapple grey,
And awa to his ain land.

To Gilchrist Earl cam' a little page,
Knelt low upon his knee,
"An't please my lord, the Black Wanlass
Has been with your sweet ladye.

"And he has gotten her gold bracelet,
And shawn't in his Companie."
Earl Gilchrist has mounted his guid black steed,
But an angry man was he.

The ladye stood on the Castle wa',
And beheld baith dale and down,
And she saw her guid lord Gilchrist Earl,
Come spurring frae Dundee town.

"Come down, come down, thou fause woman,
Come down and speak wi' me,
And tak your last glint o' the sun,
For this nicht but ye maun die."

She has taen her last look o' the sun,
And o' the Syvan fair,
And o' the sweet Howe o' Strathmore,
But and her heart was sair.

"And whare is that same gowd bracelet,
I gaed ye a year yestreen?"
And she but never spak a word
Tho' the tear stood in her e'en.

He has led her up the lang lang stair,
And up to the hie tow'r,
And he has slain his ladye fair,
And there he did her smo'er.

And by and by cam' the fause maiden,
Up to the tower sae hie ;
"Now out upon ye, bluidy Earl,
Ye hae slain my dear ladye.

"How could ye kill that sweet ladye,
That was sae true to thee?
That gowden ring which Black Wanlass shawed,
Was gien him but by me."

Earl Gilchrist has mounted his guid black steed,
He has ridden over moss and muir,
Until he saw in the lirk o' the hill,
Black Wanlass riding before.

"Light down, light down, Black Wanless," cried he,
"And tak thy sword in hand,
There's ane o' us this nicht maun die,
Light down, and mak a stand."

He has lighted down from his dapple grey,
Has lighted without a word,
And wrapped his red cloak round his arm,
And drawn his trusty sword.

The first blow that Black Wanlass strack
He gart the red bluid rin,
But the first blow that Earl Gilchrist strack
He cleav'd him to the chin.

"Alas, alas, my sweet, true luvie,
Alas, my ain dear wife,
The dead o' a hundred black as he,
Cannot gie thy fair bodie life."

And he has hackit aff the hand,
Held the ring o' his sweet ladye ;
"Now will I wear thee on my heart,
Until I come to die."

He has knelt down by the wan water,
To staunch his heart's guid bluid,
But faster aye, and faster aye,
Fell the red draps i' the fluid.

He has mounted on his guid black steed,
And fast, and fast he ran,
But faster fell the ruddy draps,
And hame he never wan.

Fause Marjorie's up to the high tower,
And looked frae the Castle wa',
And she saw her lord come hard riding,
And but she saw him fa'.

"O wae is me," fause Marjorie cried,
 "Wae to my wilfu' will,
 For they be twa o' the truest hearts,
 Wha's bluid I hae garr'd to spill."



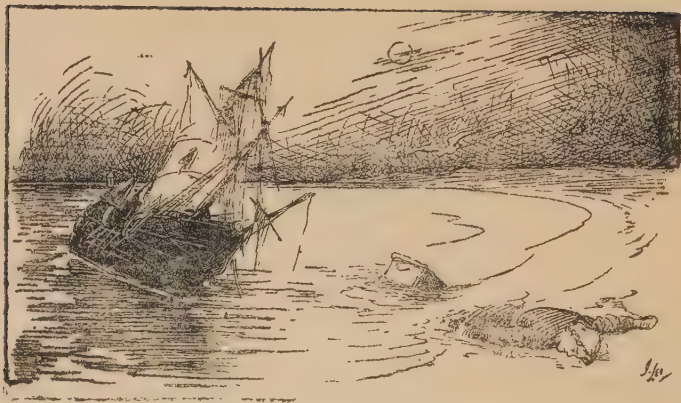
BRAMBLES.

(*Rondel.*)

Do you recall how the brambles clinging,
 Forbade us to pass o'er the broken stile,
 And you turned back with a careless smile,
 And a hand from your fair face the tresses flinging?

Somewhere above was a wild bird singing,
 As if all earth's errors he'd reconcile;
 Do you recall that the brambles clinging
 Forbade us to pass o'er the ruin'd stile?

Ah! Time has been sadly, swiftly winging,
 And we are sunder'd by mile and mile—
 Our love is dead in a drear exile—
 And the bird's wild song comes like memory, bringing
 That broken stile with the brambles clinging.



LARGO BAY.

O long ago, upon a day,
My luve sailed out o' Largo Bay,
And by the Bass, and far away,
My luve sailed out frae Largo Bay.

And long ago, to Largo Bay,
My luve come back, upon a day,
I saw his fair face 'mid the spray
On the sad sands o' Largo Bay.

The seaweed twined amang his hair,
His bonnie breast was cauld and bare,
The brine was on his brow so fair ;
O, luve ! my luve ! beyond compare..

The brine stood in his eyne o' blue;
That heart was still that beat so true—
O, cruel, cruel wind that blew
Him hame to Largo Bay !

My luve sailed out o' Largo Bay,
So long ago, upon a day,
And by the Bass—and far away
Frae me and lonely Largo Bay.

LAWYER LEIGH.

A CHRISTMAS-EVE GHOST STORY
OF THE AULD HOWFF.

*O the dolefullest ghosts that a man may see
Walk the haunted halls of old Memory.*

AULD Lawyer Leigh he was lank and lean,
Auld Lawyer Leigh he was gruff and grim,
And ane had need be baith shrewd and keen
Wad think to get uppermost hand o' him.

Auld Lawyer Leigh he was hard o' heart,
Auld Lawyer Leigh he was hard o' heid,
Wi' a hand held tight to the uttermost part
O' the siller sae *lawfully* he had made.

Auld Lawyer Leigh he sat all alone,
Wi' a plot to hatch, and a scheme to weave ;
And his six poor ill-paid scribes were gone—
Of all good times it was Christmas-Eve.

Jabez Leigh sate alone in his stately room
In the office o' Laird & Leigh & Co.,
Within, a' was shrouded in gathering gloom :
Without, in the Howff, a' was shrouded in snow.

Aye, the snow lay deep on the desolate stones,
And the graveyard was wrapped in a ghostly white,
As Nature, pitying the dead men's bones,
Did weave them a double shroud to-night.

And the gaunt trees shook in the winter's blast.

And the snaw drapp't frae them like frosted fruit,
And as sheeted dead the wreaths whirled past,
And through every cranny the wind did hoot.

But nae heed gae Leigh to the gatherin' nicht ;

Graveyairds, and ghosts he held in sma' fear,
And he loved the darkness mair nor the licht,
Because—darkness was cheap—and candles were dear !

And a' around him were parchments spread,

Wi' their strange, sad secrets, and dark and deep ;
And round him deed-boxes were openèd,
As graves where auld family skeletons sleep.

And sma' heed he gae to the wind and the snow,

Wi' his plots to hatch and his schemes to weave—
Sole partner of Laird & Leigh & Co.—
(Laird had died broken-hearted long years ago)—
Jabez sat alone on this Christmas-Eve.

Then something stirred at the window-sill,

And out of the snow cam' a voice that spake,
“ I am the Spirit of all Goodwill
Will ye lat me in for auld sake's sake ? ”

Auld Jabez Leigh rubbed his e'en in doubt,

And he sat erect in his red-cushioned chair,
And he donned his glasses, and glower'd without—
And he felt a thrill, tho' his heart was stout—
Nought but tombstones, and trees, and snow were there !

But something stirred at his window-sill,

And out of the snow cam' a voice that spake,
“ I am the Spirit of all Goodwill,
Will ye lat me in for auld sake's sake ? ”

“ Must ha' been dreaming, sure,” old Jabez growled,

As he lit up his candles, and poked up his fire,
“ 'Twas only the wind,” hark, e'en then how it howled—
Here the light flickered out—why, we will not enquire.

And something stirred at his window-sill,
And something tapped at his window-pane ;
The stout heart o' Jabez well-nigh stood still—
For *something* whimpered and tapped again.

And out i' the snow stood his partner auld,
And his lank jaws fell in a horrid grin,
And he gibbered and chattered and shook i' the cauld,
Says, " Jabez Leigh, open and lat me in ! "

But Jabez he looked to the window-pin,
And Jabez he glowered at the oaken door,
Says, " Silas, I daurna tak' ye in—
For—sae often I've *taken ye in* afore ! "

And there i' the snaw stood a score o' dead,
And they fixed on him an accusing eye,
And weel Jabez ken'd them, and straight hid his head,
The clients he'd cheated in days gane by.

" Restore to the widow and child they cry,
" What ye stole, and canna gie back to the dead ! "
And auld Jabez knew that their tale was true,
And he turned frae their e'en, and he buried his head.

And out o' the snow cam' his father stern,
And he bent upon him a troubled brow,
" What I taught ye, ye havena been loth to learn—
What I hinted, ye havena been slow to discern—
As *I* was, e'en so art thou ! "

And out o' the snow cam' his long-dead Youth,
The brave and bold that he used to be,
And he looked on Jabez wi' eyes o' ruth,
And he said, " Is it thus ye hae dealt wi' me ? "

And out o' the snow cam' his dead first love,
And she gazed on him wi' reproachfu' e'en,
And spake his name wi' the voice o' a dove,
And he thought, God wot ! o' what might hae been.

He thought, God wot ! o' what might hae been,
Ere his heart was hardened wi' greed o' gold,
And his firm waxed fat—and his soul waxed lean,
And love was a thing to be bought and sold.

And out o' the snow cam' his mother mild,
And she looked on him wi' a troubled e'e,
And she cried, " My child, my bonnie child !
Is this what the warld has made o' thee ? "

And Jabez cried loudly, and bade her bide,
" My dear dead mother o' long ago ; "
But where she had been was nought beside,
But the twisted trees and the stones and the snow.

And something stirred at his window-sill,
And out of the snow-wreath a soft voice spake,
" I am the Spirit of all Goodwill,
Will ye no lat me in for auld sake's sake ? "

And something stirred in his stern old soul,
And something into his hard heart crept ;
And as sunlight over the graveyaird stole,
Old Jabez Leigh bow'd his head and wept.

*O blesséd above all ghosts that be,
Are the ghosts which awaken old Memory !*

THE BONNIE BRAID BLUE BONNET.

The braw blue bonnet,
 The braid blue bonnet,
 The brave blue bonnet's dear to me ;
 Could I but write a sang or sonnet
 Wad o' blue bonnets worthy be.

Whan Wallace wight, wi' hert an' will,
 Did fecht that Scotland might be free,
 Frae Stirling Brig—till on Tower Hill,
 As he had lived, so did he dee ;
 He wore a bonnet,
 A braw blue bonnet,
 Aneath which glanc't his piercin' e'e,
 An' weel the Saxons learnt to shun it,
 Nor waited his great sword to pree.

Whan Bruce the bold at Bannockburn,
 Did Bohun beat ontill his knee,
 An' gar't proud Edward's English turn,
 And gar't them turn,—an' gar't them flee ;
 He wore a bonnet,
 A brave blue bonnet,
 An' weel I wot he cock't it hie ;
 The battle he might ne'er hae won it,
 But brave blue bonnets bore the gree.

Whan Chairlie cam' to claim his ain,
 An' lead his clans o'er moss and river,
 Until on dark Culloden plain
 His sun gaed doon in blood for ever ;
 He wore a bonnet,
 A braw blue bonnet,
 Upon his gowden, yellow hair ;
 His croon, had he but come to don it,
 Could nae hae made him look mair fair.

An' they, the clansmen brave, wha cherish'd
 Their richtfu' king in loyaltie,
 An' bravely fought—and bravely perish'd
 That he might yet enthronèd be ;
 They wore blue bonnets,
 Braw, braw blue bonnets,
 An' tartan streamin' wild an' free,
 Ah ! crimsoned dark wi' blood upon it ;
 Alas ! that we the day should see.

An' Flora, wha her Prince did guide
 An' tend amid each toil an' danger,
 Until he cross't the waters wide,
 Far frae his ain to dwell—a stranger ;
 She wore a bonnet,
 A bonnie bonnet,
 Weel it becam' her face, I ween,
 An' whan his kingly smile was on it,
 She wadna chang't wi' ony queen.

But happiest mem'ry o' them a',
 Whan Donal' first cam' coortin' me,
 Wi' stap sae licht, wi' dress sae braw,
 An' love lookin' frae out his e'e,—
 He wore a bonnet,
 A braw, blue bonnet,
 Wi' feather in it fair to see ;
 My he'rt I tint thro' gazin' on it,
 Sma' wonder that its dear to me.

The brave blue bonnet,
 The braw blue bonnet,
 The braid blue bonnet's dear to me ;
 Could I but write a sang or sonnet,
 Wad o' blue bonnets worthy be.

ST. MARY'S TOWER : THE OLD STEEPLE.

THE traffic and the tumult of the town
 Roll round thy feet ;
 Above, upon thine ancient, hoary crown
 The air is sweet—
 The air is very sweet, and looking down,
 How Lilliputian seem the strivings in the street.

Landmark to mariners from the boisterous
 And stormy sea !
 Did good Earl David when he built thee thus,
 So stout and free,
 Design thee also beacon unto us
 Poor trav'lers, pointing havens where 'twere well
 to be ?

The sunlight striking on thy sober stone
 Turns it to gold,
 And thou, to us a vocal Memnon grown,
 Dost straight unfold
 Stories of Scottish Stuarts' toppling throne,
 And sad forgotten sagas of the days of old.

And on thy crumbling, weather-beaten walls
 There still remain
 The marks of Monck's old wicked musket balls,
 And scar and stain,
 Which well that stout and stubborn siege recalls
 Where Lumsden brave, and many loyal men were
 slain.

High o'er the city's chaos, calm, serene,
 Holdst thou thy head,
 As pondering still these old things thou hast seen,
 In times now fled—
 Wait on ! A happier, lustier life, I ween,
 Shall surge around thee when these dullard days
 are dead.

Hast thou not oft beheld the dawning break,
 And darkness flee ?
 Hast thou not seen creed and convention shake,
 And cruel decree ?
 Wait on ! Thy bells may yet awake
 In pæans for Mankind—emancipate, and free !

The tumult and the traffic of the town
 Roar round thy feet ;
 Above, upon thy queenly, quaint old crown
 Is quiet retreat—
 Is very quiet retreat, whence gazing down,
 How Lilliputian seem the strivings in the street.

“THE SHIRRA.”

Wha is it cracks full mony a joke,
 (Unknown to Lyttleton or Coke)
 Wi's clients—puir, dumb prison folk ?—
 The Shirra.

Wha is't whan its a case o' poachin'
 Looks ower his specs without reproachin',
 Dreamin' o' days whan he was “coachin'” ?
 The Shirra.

He thinks o' Shakespeare—Robin Hood,
 Of pranks in Arden and Sherwood ;
 “A month,” says he, in absent mood—
 Ah ! Shirra.

An' what an' if he chance to chide
 Some haughty Counsel, fu' o' pride—
 His judgments lean to mercy's side—
 Auld Shirra !

May he be spared for mony a day
 His thumb upon the law to lay.
 His health—A bumper now—Here's tae
 The Shirra !

THE HOLIDAY ADVENTURES OF ROB DONN.

ROB DONN cam' doon frae Aberdeen
(A city cauld if unco clean),
To spend a week wi' his auld frien',
Douce Tammis Wabster o' Dundee,
And a' the city's sights to see.

The twa hae'in' met, first wat their throats,
And syne began comparin' notes—
As Tam's son, Tam, wha gaed awa',
How he was dae'in' in Canada ;
How Jean his dochter, saucy witch,
Was makin' up wi' sich an' sich ;
How trade was dull, and wad remain
Till Tories cam' to power again.—
“ The Missus ?—Od, she's gi'an weel—
Which minds me, here's some currant jeel ;
Lang Sandy Laggan ?—aye, puir chiel,
Wi' drink has fair gaen to the deil,
And Jock ran aff wi' Jess, the jade—
And but a bonnie mess baith made ;
Geordie Gow's droon'd, and Hecky's dead'—
Here Rob looked grave, and shook his head—
“ There's nought but change as auld Time passes.”—
“ Lat's cheenge the subject—pass the glasses,”
Quo' Wabster, “ here's to bonnie lasses.”
A toast or twa—which Tammis paid—
Syne airm in airm, awa' they gaed,
And quietly daunder'd doon the toon
To tak' the air, and look aroun'.

Spake Rob, "Man', it's an awfu' pity,
 Dundee is sic a dirty city,
 The smeekest place I've ever seen—
 And no' a patch on Aberdeen."
 Tam paid nae heed, "This here's the Steeple,
 In which Monk smoor'd a heap o' people :
 I hae't frae them that understand,
 The finest tower in a' the land"—
 "Hoot, toot," said Rob, "that's fair ridic'lous,
 Just see St Machar and St. Nicholas."

Now thro' the Vault they bend their staps,
 Wi' sundry halts for sundry draps—
 For a' o' which Tam Wabster paid—
 And syne they reach'd the Esplanade—
 "Behold the Tay !" Tam proudly cried,
 And now Rob, now the river eyed.
 "Dod, brawly, brawly," Rob replied,
 "But, Tammas, hae ye ever seen
 The Dee and Don at Aberdeen ?"

Tam nothing spake, tho' feelin' mad,
 But stapped alang the promenade,
 Until they cam', where, span on span,
 The great brig ower the river ran—
 Ane o' the michtiest warks o' man.
 Tam looked at Rob, "Ye've nought sae big
 In Aberdeen as oor Tay brig ?
 And, man, I've nae doot ye remember
 How on the twenty-acht December,
 O' '79, the first brig fell,
 Wi' seventy sowls for heav'n or hell"—
 Tam interrupted wi', "Well, well,
 But if you will it'll be a fa'
 Whan fa's Balgownie Brig's black wa !"

Quo' Tammas, shortly, "Come I think
 We'd better hae anither drink."
 And they had sae, and maybe twa—
 Tammas, as usual, paid for a'—
 While Rob remarked upo' the merits

O' every ither glass o' spirits,
And thocht it was but sorry stuff,
Whilk sune gar't Tammas tak' the huff,
Sae he shouts, " Hold, ye've had enough ! "
Which was nae mair nor just the truth,
For Rob was but an unco drouth,
Wad drink ilk mornin' till the dawin'—
If tither fellow paid the lawin' ;
And even now, for very shame,
Tam felt he couldna tak' him hame,
To meet his ever-curious dame.

And sae they dinner'd i' the toon ;
Scotch broth, a steak dune fine an' broon—
Again Tam plank'd the siller doon—
And a' the thanks that Rob return'd
Was, " Shuirely but the broth was burned,"
And, " finest dinners ever seen
Were to be had in Aberdeen."
Tam inly mutters, " Ay, cauld kail ! "
Then Rob out by the airm doth hale,
And gets him up into a tram,
" Ye're service isna worth a d——n ! "
Cries Rob, and wearies for a dram.

And now Tam lugs Rob up the Law,
To see if the snell winds that blaw
Will help to sober him a bit ;
Sae there upo' the tap they sit,
And Rob was pleased wi' nought they saw,
Cried, " What a mole-hill is the Law !
The Sidlaw Hills !—they're merely wens
Compar'd wi' Aberdeen's big Bens ! "

Again Tam took him up to toon,
And help'd the well-nigh helpless roun' ;
And as they passed a hatter's shop,
Rob proudly cam' to a full stop—
" We've bigger heads, we Northern loons,
Than chaps in ony ither toons."
" Ye're ain's sae swall'd, I dinna doot it,"

Low mutter'd Tam, "but what about it?
 Oft biggest nuts hae sma'est kernel,"
 Syne added, "This man's pride's infernal!"
 And things were onything but cheery,
 And baith were growin' unco weary,
 And neither were in *Bon Accord*—
 Ane bein' fou' as ony lord.

Cried Rob, as they tramp'd thro' the weet,
 "O, for a sicht o' Union Street!"

Wi' that Tam's wrath sae lang up-pent,
 Like a volcano now had vent;
 Straucht to the station doon he went,
 And, openin' wide a carriage door,
 He lays Rob sprawlin' on the floor—
 Under his head his currant jam—
 And, mutterin' something gey like "d——n"
 Tam shut the door to wi' a slam;
 "Noo hame," cried he, "and glad ye're een
 Wi' the glories a' o' Aberdeen!"

COMPENSATIONS.

I HAVE supped heavily of sorrow,
 But yet the sun shall rise to-morrow.

I have been beaten to my knees,
 Yet list! the wind within the trees!

I have been scourgéd as with bars!
 But lo! the coolness of the stars!

After the heat and toil of noon,
 Into my heart there glides the moon.

I have been much in love with death—
 But still—this ecstasy of breath!



CASTLE DUDHOPE.

I will watch to-night ; perchance 'twill walk again.—Hamlet

AH ! spirits well might walk to-night
Within this soft and still moonlight.

Even as I gaze—a shadow wavers—
Perchance brave, bonnie, bloody Clavers,

A ghostly visitant, doth pace,
Around his ancient biding place ;

Pondering upon his battles past,
When like an angry Winter's blast

Across old Scotland braid he swept.
Thinking perchance of her who wept

Within this self-same ruined tow'r
In that last sad and parting hour,

Within the which he rode away
To Killiecrankie's fatal fray.

Hearing the bonnie bridles ring ;
Hearing the shout of—"For the King!"

The clock upon thy old bell tow'r
Still stands at just the self-same hour,

But time has flown with me I ween,
Since last I sported on thy green ;

And squandered many a truant day
Around thy turrets grim and gray.

Or in the eaves made earnest quest
For sparrows' and for starlings' nest.

Or in the long brown grass did lie,
Letting the lazy hours go by.

And thro' these waving prison bars,
Look wondering at the wandering stars.

Or watch the red sun sink to rest
In ruddy glory in the west ;

So red, it sometimes seemed to me,
Gehenna's awful gulf to be ;

But yet so beautiful, that calm
Stole o'er my spirits like a balm,

And something whisper'd, "It is well—
Even tho' thou make thy bed in hell."

The painted clock upon thy tow'r
Still points to just the self-same hour.

But time, alas ! has flown for me,
Since last I sported here in glee.

THE BLUE BELL INN.

The Old Man Soliloquizes :

THO' thou art now grown auld and grey,
Yet Spindleshanks, thou'st had thy day !
He, he !—Soon must thou shuffle off—
Ho, ho !—(Curse that confounded cough !)—
Thou art the last o' a' the kin
Foregathered at the Blue Bell Inn.

To hear Dryden discourse at Will's
Wi' wits wore swords as lang's—their bills !
To hearken to the things were said
In Shakespeare and Jonson's Old Mermaid !
To cry in at the Cheshire Cheese !—
Weel—the Blue Bell was just like these.

Not more we lo'ed the flowing bowl,
Than that richt ready flow of soul ;
The stories caused our sides to split,
The wordy war, the wanton wit,
The satire, sharp as javelin,
We hurled about the Blue Inn.

And weighty matters we'd discuss,
Problems profound and ponderous,
Affairs o' Council and o' State,
Our country's destinie and fate—
Ane might jalouse frae sic a din
The " House " sat at the Blue Bell Inn !

Till Tam, i' chair, wad thump the table,
And "Order !" bawl aboon the babel,
But a' the "order" that we ga'e,
Was whatna drink we each wad hae—
The liquour poured out like a linn
When drouths met at the Blue Bell Inn !

What if we couldna pay the score
Chalked 'gainst our name ahint the door ?
The fastest way out o' the trouble
Was—to drink on till it was double,
Syne slyly chuck her 'neath the chin,
Mine hostess o' the Blue Bell Inn !

Weel, a' my cronies round that board,
Hae passed Death's dark unfathomed ford ;
How some o' thae puir drouthy souls,
Wha swelter and sweat upon the coals,
Wad welcome ae bottle frae the bin,
Doon by at the auld Blue Bell Inn !

Greybread, tho' thou art getting auld,
And banes are stiff, and blood is cauld,
Ae sound wad gar ye cock an ear,
Ae sound wad glad thy heart to hear—
Yea ! force the tribute of a tear—
The clink o' cup and cannikin,
Aince mair at the auld Blue Bell Inn !



M'COMY-MOHR:

A STORY OF AN OLD-TIME FORFAR
FEUD BETWIXT THE CLANS FARQUHAR
SON AND M'COMY.

"I shall overcome in my with God's help"—

Inscription upon stone from M'Comy-Mohr's House at Crandart.

"LANG STRANG" was telling out the hour,
As o'er the Castle Hill's high tower
I leanéd once upon a day,
All the sweet Strath in sunshine lay,
Upward came sounds of quiet life—
Bethought me of this far-off strife :—

M'COMY-MOHR was a mighty chief,
Curb of the cateran and the thief ;
Gray and grisled, and gaunt and grim,
Long and lean, and lank o' limb—
Was old M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy-Mohr had stout sons seven—
The mother that bore them was passed to heaven—
And he taught them not to scribe and spell
But to wield and carry their claymores well—
Did proud M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy-Mohr had seven stout sons ;
M'Comy Mohr—so the record runs—
Thought the eldest son less bold than the rest,
And to put his prowess to the test
Planned proud M'Comy-Mohr.

He hid at dark by *M'Comy's Chair*,*
And upon his son sprung unaware,
When straight began a bluidy fight,
But Ian proved a stronger wight
Than e'en M'Comy-Mohr.

* *A large stone, standing in the solitude of Glenbaynie, is known to this day as M'Comy's Chair.*

" Now good son Ian, hold thy hand,
And sheath thy durk, put up thy brand,
Thy courage some would have belied,
But I am amply satisfied,"

Loud cried M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy Mohr, chief of his clan,
Oft by the crooked Caenlochan
Would pitch the caber and put the stone,
And there was never found a one
Could beat M'Comy-Mohr.*

And by Caenlochan, from the fen,
Appeared to him a Mermaiden,
Whose syren voice held him in spell,
While she did of the future tell
To old M'Comy-Mohr.

And soothly did she prophecy
That when M'Comy cam' to die,
On siccan stane wad rest his head—
He stuck that stane aneath his bed !—
Ah ! sly M'Comy-Mohr.

And many are the stories told
Of Mermaid and M'Comy bold,
And how once madly did he ride
Wi' Mermaid mounted by his side
(The ladye couldna sat astride !)
Ah ! deil M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy Mohr held the Baronie
Of Forther, and Finnygand in Glenshee,
And forestry-right in Glascorie ;
And he went to law wi' Farquharson,
And M'Comy lost, and Farquharson won—
" Damn the law !" cried M'Comy-Mohr.

* Two round boulders, each of great weight, which M'Comy is said to have thrown far beyond any of his companions, still lie by the side of Caenlochan, and bear his name.

M'Comy-Mohr has sworn a feud
'Gainst Farquharson Brochdarg and a' his brood ;
"Now two o' my best sons wad I ware,
If Brochdarg dead were but lying there,"
Quoth wroth M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy-Mohr has sworn by his knife,
"Bring me Brochdarg's arm, or leg, or lyfe,
And for it I'se your warrant be,
Wha wad or durst speir it of me ?"
Cried cruel M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy-Mohr wi's arméd men
Is hunting for Brochdarg in the glen ;
They hae hunted up and hunted down,
They hae met ilk ither near Forfar town :
Alas ! for M'Comy Mohr.

For the first shot has his twa sons slain,
And now the bluid rins down like rain ;
And swords and skean-dhus fast are plied,
And brave men fall upon each side—
"Brochdarg !" "M'Comy-Mohr !"

And who shall say wha lost, wha won ?
Or ere that bluidy day was done
Dead lay old Brochdarg and his son.
M'Comy-Mohr his red sword waved,
"We've got at least the lyfe we craved !"
Cried stern M'Comy-Mohr.

M'Comy-Mohr, when at last to him,
This world and all its ways waxed dim,
Passed peacefully upon his bed—
The stone being underneath his head—
Farewell ! M'Comy-Mohr.

Of stern stuff was M'Comy made,
 Stout was his heart, and keen his blade,
 Some cursed his soul, some Masses said,
 There were springs as well as dirges played,
 At the death of M'Comy-Mohr.*

* *The death of M'Comy-Mohr was looked upon by the Cateran whom he had kept in check, as a great deliverance, and one of their number returning from the Lowlands at the time, joyously exclaimed, in answer to the question—"Ciod an sgeul?" "Sgeul! agus deagh sgeul! Beannaichte gu robh an Oighe Muire! Cha bhco Mac Omie Mor am braigh na macharach,—ge'd bu mhor agus bu laidire!" i.e. "What news!" "News! and good news! Blessed be the Virgin Mary! The great McComy in the head of the Lowlands is dead, for as big and as strong as he was!"*

In Memoriam.

DAVID MACRAE.

16th MAY, 1907.

I have fought a good fight,
 I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith.

The clarion voice is still,
 Fallen the noble crest,
 The lion heart and valiant will
 Have rest.

'Mid cold, confining creeds,
 And Gospels gaunt and grim,
 Our humble human hopes and needs
 Enough for him.

Why do we stand at gaze?
 And who is he that weeps?
 See, after storm and stress of days,
 How well he sleeps!

THE PLOUGHING MATCH.

THE last faint stars fade frae the sky,
 A snell wind heralds morning nigh ;
 Behind yon dark black belt of firs,
 The coming sunrise burns and stirs.
 The "ploughs" hae long since left their beds,
 (A' but some twa three sleepy heads),
 And gropin' grumblin' to the stable,
 Hae harness'd up as fest's they're able ;
 Their parraitch suppit wi' despatch,
 An' mony a glance at tickin' watch—
 Is't no the morning o' the Match ?
 And now, frae far out-lying pairts,
 On rumblin', rusty, creakin' cairts,
 Wi' plough-trees stickin' ower the side ;
 Wi' colours braw on "Bess" an' "Pride" ;
 Wi' crackin' whups, an' creakin' chains,
 Come twa score honest, sturdy swains.

The auldest there o' a' the men
 Is something ower three score an' ten ;
 The youngest scarcely seventeen,
 But a' alike alert an' keen,
 An' eagerly prepared to see
 Whilk lad the best can labour lea.

An' now they buckle to the yokin',
 Wi' muckle mirth an' unco jokin',
 An' jests at ane anither pokin',
 Syne i' the bag they pou' for places,
 The which they tak' wi' grins—grimaces,
 An' no wi' juist the best o' graces,
 Gif they maun plough hard, hilly spaces.

Now ready a' ! Bang ! gaes the gun,
 Awa they go—the game's begun !
 Each ploughman spits in's hand and twists
 The reins round's souple, iron wrists,
 Syne straucht an' sure the shares gae steering
 Betwixt the "fearing" an' the "fearing,"
 The speeding prowls turn doon the sod
 Till belts o' broon earth shew fu' broad.

And now the fields buzz like a fair ;
 The farmer in his gig is there,
 The laird upon his auld roan mare ;
 And Mrs Ploughman comes to see,
 (And Mrs Ploughman yet to be),
 And fouks frae parishes twa three.

"Dodd man, auld Duncan's ca'in' through,
 Wi's puir done horse an' box o' pleugh."
 So says douce, honest Dauvit Murray,
 Snuff-takin' wi' the Secretary—
 Wha looks up's book—"It wad appear
 He's towmond younger than last year !—
 Deed Duncan's aye baith stout an' strang—
 May Reaper Death still spare him lang !"

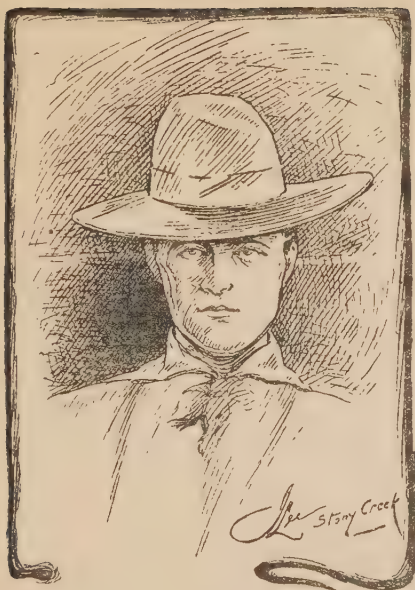
'Tis twal—Each gets a big braid bridie,
 Wi' bottle black—Ah ! woe betide ye
 Puir chiels, wi' sic a load inside ye !
 They say he never ploughs sae weel
 Wha eats ower hearty o' this meal !

Then till't again—Wha'd bear the gree
 Must finish later nane than three—

But Bess's joy is ill conceal'd,
 Whan Donal's foremost aff the field !

And now I lave ye to surmise
 Which ploughman lifted whatna prize ;
 Wha' "Harness" "Manes an' Tails" did win,
 Wha' "Ploughin'," "Finish," "Out an' In."

See ! hameward a' the cairts hae wended,
 Wi' happy children weel attended—
 THE MATCH—and but my space—is ended !



COWBOY REQUIEM.



"PHIL BURT (a Dundee boy) died last Sunday. You remember Phil? We buried him near Spring Canyon, which also you cannot have forgotten."—*Letter to the Author.*

Let me rest in some well-loved place
Of our old-time Cowboy Camps,
Where the night wind kissed our face,
And the stars swung low like lamps.

Just roll me up in my blanket,
My old saddle under my head,
I've slept so sound that way afore—
I'll sleep best so when I'm dead.

And against the final round-up,*
Lay my lariat by my side,
So's if I chance to sprout no wings,
I kin rope a bronc an' ride.
(*Phil would always have his joke.*)

Where the winds walk thro' the grass,
Leave me and let me lie ;
I shall hear your hail as you pass,
When the herds go thundering by ;
Hear the lone coyote cry.

Let me rest in the great wide plain—
Boundless and wild and free—
Not far from the wind and the sun and the rain,
And it shall be well with me.

** The Cowboy's theological terminology is strongly tinged by his calling. Thus the Judgment-Day is the "Great Round-up." If you are a regular "out-an'-outer," you bear the devil's brand. A "maverick" is a term which is applied with equal appropriateness to an unbranded steer or to a man halting between two opinions.*





THE WHALERS' WAY-GOING.

NOR'ARD away, for Hudson Bay!
 An' our ships bear for th' bar,
 Th' glimmering light at th' mast to-night
 Shud nod to th' Polar Star.
 Sick are we o' city sight an' sound,
 We steer whar silence are.

A-many times in many climes
 I've sail-ed on the sea;
 Much ha' I seen whar I ha' been
 Not understood of me,
 But thro' th' gate by Davis Strait
 Lies Almighty's mystery.

There is our way, whar the whale-schools play,
 An' the ice-floes fret an' tear,
 Whar wi' crest an' crown iron icebergs frown,
 An' the north'rn streamers flare—
 (An' stillness slumbers there),
 An' there's ne'er a soul 'twixt you an' th' Pole
 But an Eskimo an' a bear!

Nor'ard away, to Hudson Bay !
 An' our ships beat for th' bar.
 Yo-ho ! to-night each masthead light
 Shall dip to the Polar Star ;
 Sick are we o' city sight an' sound,
 We're bearin' out for th' fishing-ground,
 Whar seas o' silence are.

THE WHALERS.

A CHANTY OF HOME-COMING.

OUT o' the North, out o' the night,
 Out o' the cold we come ;
 From the ice-bound Bay
 To the Bar o' Tay,
 An' our wives, an' our weans, an' home.
 We ha' been to seek the wily, oily whale,
 Whar he sporteth i' the sea,
 An' ye may not rail that we chance to fail,
 The " fish " grow as wise as we ;
 (We made one fast in '94, which was struck in '53)*
 An' of the way into Melville Bay
 The Almighty keepeth the key.

Our batter'd, broken bows borne back
 By the cruel ice, and keen,
 We could not make the Nor' Wat-er,
 An' we're so returnin'—" clean."
 An' fat years, by-gone, o' oil an' bone
 Wi' men nor masters don't atone
 For a year that is lank and lean.

* In 1894 the crew of the *Terra Nova*, while flensing the blubber of a large whale, discovered a harpoon belonging to the whaler *Jane*, of Bo'ness, and dated 1853. The *Jane* was lost in the ice in 1857.

The demon o' the dreary North
Flick'd us wi' his icy flail,
An' gave us year o' wind an' rain,
An' rain, an' wind, an' hail,
(An' mony a gust an' gale);
In his grim grip, the staunchest ship
An' the stoutest heart is frail.

Out o' the North, an' the night, an' the cold,
An' the tempest sweepin' shrill,
From the ice-barr'd way
To the peaceful Tay—
(See the tower an' the little hill!)
Out o' the night, out o' the North,
Out o' the cold we come :
From the ice-bound Bay
To the Bar o' Tay,
An' our wives, an' our weans, an' home.



THE OLD SCHOOL.

ONCE more I tread the well-known ways,
On old land-marks I fondly gaze—
Returning after many days.

Yea ! 'tis the same old square old school,
In which I learned each tiresome rule,
(Oft roundly rated for a fool).

The western windows blaze with sun,
The long and drowsy day is done,
The boys pour outwards at the run.

A hundred happy boys burst out ;
In merry mood, with joyous shout,
They put the speeding ball about.

I mark each strenuous, sporting soul,
Agile, alert, as uncurbed foal—
Hark ! pæan raised proclaims a goal !

Ah me ! it seems but yesterday,
Since last I sported here in play,
Or fought in just such mimic fray.

And with regretful pang I trace
The new and unfamiliar face
Around the old familiar place.

I wonder where on earth is Jack,
Our famous fighting form's full back ?—
Or Dick, the demon at attack ?

Or Rogers, matchless in the Gym.,
Rogers the lion—large of limb—
Ah ! none of us could look at him.

Our dashing cricket skipper—he
Who thrice put up a century—
Drowned deep in lone Magellan Sea !

And now within the gathering gloom,
I pace through each deserted room ;
The Rector speaks, “ Boys to resume—”

I wander on as in a dream ;
The things which I was wont to deem
So wondrous large—how small they seem !

Upon this floor our straggling form
Oft weather'd fierce scholastic storm—
“ Old Croak ” could keep our jackets warm !

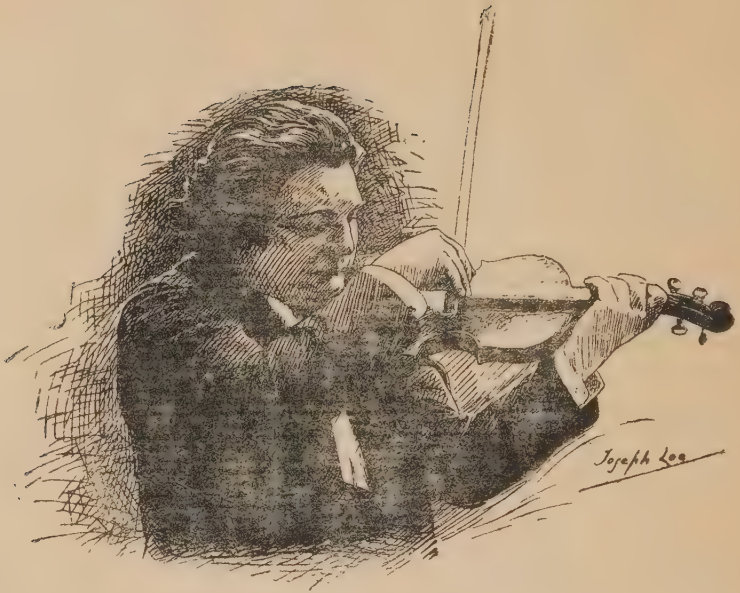
I hear the swishing sweep of cane ;
A fly hums on the window pane—
Lo ! I am schoolboy once again !

A boy who in his copy writes,
Yet secret scans *Arabian Nights* ! ;
(Ah ! woe betide the luckless wights
Caught at such dearly-born delights)

My desk !—where I my name did hack—
I trace it midst the general wrack
What stood for *Jo* now stands for *Jack* !

Even so our lives do slip away ;
A little while of work and play—
A longer or a shorter stay—

And then Death opens wide the door ;
The school's dismissed, the tasks are o'er,
We go, and we return no more.



YSAYE PLAYING.

KINNAIRD HALL, NOVEMBER, 1908.

A SILENCE falls
 Within the expectant walls,
 And then—a still small voice, into each corner seeking,
 Speaking, and speaking.

Like the first flickerings of the coming morn,
 Like blowings faint of far-off elfin horn,
 Like the sad, stately anthem to the shore sea-borne.

Like some sad sea upon a lonely shore,
 Moaning and yearning vainly evermore,
 Like vague mysterious murmurings from mountains hoar.

In dim procession past with ghostly tread,
Come long-lost Loves, and Passions pale and dead,
And backward through Life's 'wilder'd labyrinth we are
lead.

Is this a known voice from the vanished past ?
Is this a whisper from the enfolding vast ?
Is this an answer to Man's questful soul at last ?

Away ! away ! thy tortured scourgéed strings,
Whisper my soul unutterable things,
And goad and urge it upward on Icarian wings.

Sweeping and circling through whole nights of stars,
And blindly beating at Heaven's distant bars,
And waging madly in wild elemental wars.

Away ! my soul is satiate with sweet sound ;
Straight hurl we headlong downward to the ground,
In the fell grip of some great grim despair and grief pro
found,

Not of the viol only is thine art—
Thou playest on the red strings of the heart,
Into each dim recess and darkest seeking,
And speaking, speaking.

LAYS OF THE LOOM.

No. 1.—THE PLAINT OF THE AGED SPINNER.

THE whistles' loud weary wailing
 Is calling me from my bed,
 Like the shrill Last Trumpet calling
 The sinfu', unwilling dead.

From the shelter of my poor room,
 To the cheerless streets and chill
 I go, for my doom is the living tomb
 Of the great gaunt grimy mill.

Bleak and black is the morning—and cold,
 It nips me in blood and in bone ;
 For I am but withered and old,
 Old and alone—all alone.

Here has my poor life been passed,
 'Mid the dirt, and the dust, and the din ;
 When Death opens his quiet doors at last,
 How glad shall I enter in !

The great wheels are whirling wild,
 And the out-spun jute-threads shine
 Like the hair o' a little child—
 Ah ! that long-dead bairn o' mine.

My ain bairn, so fragile, so fair ;
 Sometimes my poor eyes grow dim,
 For half-timer Jo over there,
 With the cough, reminds me o' him.

Here I toiled till the day I bore him,
 Till I fell on the sacks in a swoond ;
 Here I toiled till from me they tore him,
 And hid him away in the ground.

Oftimes to the chapel I creep,
 And sit very quiet in my place,
 And my upturned gaze I keep
 On sweet Mother Mary's face.

O, sweet Mary, Mother of God,
 When this dull and drear life is done,
 Shall I kiss him—long cold in the sod ?
 Lo, speak ! for thou too had'st a Son.

Ye great ones and mighty of earth,
 Who dwell in fair places and high,
 Comes there not in the midst of your mirth
 A faint sound of our cry.

Think ye then that our hearts may not break ?
 Our grief, is it nothing to you ?
 Yea, all the wide world would awake
 To our woe, if the world only knew !

NO. 2.—TAEDIUM VITAE—LIFE WEARINESS.

The other day I overheard a scrap of conversation between two mill-girls. One apparently intended an outing somewhere and was desirous of the other's companionship. The second girl's response struck me as being peculiarly pathetic. "I'm sorry," said she sadly, "but when I get home at night I'm so tired, I just sit."

She sits alone ;
 Entombed in a drear sepulchre of stone—
 Pent in a prison-house of flesh and bone ;
 Crushed and uncouth, uncaring and unknown,
 She sits alone.

Somewhere the winds are walking through the leaves
 Somewhere tired birds are twittering 'neath the eaves,
 Somewhere strong arms up-swing the heavy sheaves ;
 She sits alone.

Somewhere quiet streams are gliding to the sea,
 Somewhere are children playing on the lea ;
 Somewhere, perchance, love waits for you and me ;
 She sits alone.

Somewhere arises strain of sweetest song,
 The strong ones seize the pleasures of the strong ;
 Weak, o'erwhelmèd by a mighty wrong,
 She sits alone.

As loath to die, the splendid day expires,
 Dreaming sad things on slumberous funeral pyres ;
 Calm night lights up a million beacon fires ;
 She sits alone.

In all earth's wondrous pageant, what her part ?
 This human chattel in inhuman mart,
 This pin in a machine—this tortur'd heart
 That breaks alone.

Is this what Nature travailed to evolve ?
 Is this the secret which the ages solve ?
 This child of broken will and vain resolve
 Who sits alone ?

This haunted thing that labours like the brute
 (As seeming patient, and as sadly mute)
 For what ?—some sorry shreds of sacking—jute !
 And that alone.

So many days of stress and nights of sleep
 For her—then darkness and the unknown deep,
 And old earth circling on in awful sweep—
 Alone, Alone ?

Yea ! *make ye sack-cloth*—clothe yourselves therein,
 Ye mighty magnates, who nor toil nor spin,
 And sit in penance for a grievous sin
 Ages may not atone.

THE WEAVERS.*

From the German of Heinrich Heine.

No tears are in their eyes of gloom,
But like grinning death-heads they work at the loom;
"Our country, we weave for thee now a shroud,
With a threefold curse for the mighty and proud,
We weave, we weave !

"A curse on the God unto whom we cried,
When our people perished for lack of bread ;
In vain did we hope, and in vain did we wait,
He fooled and derided, and mocked at our fate.
We weave, we weave !

"A curse on the King—of the rich—for he
Has not sought to soften our misery,
But from us has wrung the last farthing we'd got,
Then left us like dogs in the streets to be shot.
We weave, we weave !

"A curse, a curse on the false fatherland,
Where infamies flourish upon every hand,
Where the fairest flow'rs fall before they unfold.
While worms batten on foulness and festering mold—
We weave, we weave !

"The great looms groan, and the shuttles flee,
Day and night we are weaving unceasingly ;
Our country, we weave for thee now a shroud,
With a threefold curse for the haughty and proud—
We weave, we weave !"

* At its first appearance this poem was suppressed by the Censors.

WHAT THO' WE'RE PUIR!

WHAT tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
 And o' world's wealth hae got sma' share ;
 Our heids we'll haud as high in air,
 Our caps we'll cock as deil-ma-care,
 Altho' we're puir !

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
 Our loves to us are just as fair,
 Our loves to us are just as rare,
 As they wi' jewels i' their hair—
 What tho' we're puir ?

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
 Let lords and ladies strut and stare ;
 Satin and silk hods mony a sair—
 Stripped o' the glitter and the glare
 Their souls are puir !

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
 A saxpence still we've aye to spare !
 Surfeit o' wealth's increase o' care,
 And siller's sheen is aft a snare—
 Thank God we're puir !

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
 What if we feed on frugal fare,
 A tattie's as guid's a *pomme de terre*—
 A gourmet himsel' can get nae mair,
 What tho' we're puir ?

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
Our backs are braw an' broad to bear,
Our sinews strong to speed the share ;
Our hearts are stout to do and dare,
 Tho' we are puir.

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
For us the fields their beauties wear,
For us the lark sings in the air,
O' a' earth's glories we are heir—
 We *arena* puir !

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
The day is coming—slow but sure,
When man for man shall slave nae mair,
But a' shall serve an' a' shall share,
 An' a' be brethren everywhere.

What tho' we're puir, what tho' we're puir !
O' gold and gear hae got sma' share,
Our caps we'll cock as deil-ma-care,
Our heids we'll haud as high in air,
 Tho' we are puir !

THE END.

